

THE LIFE OF W. J. FOX

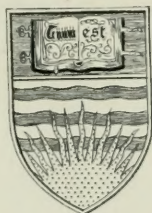
RICHARD GARNETT

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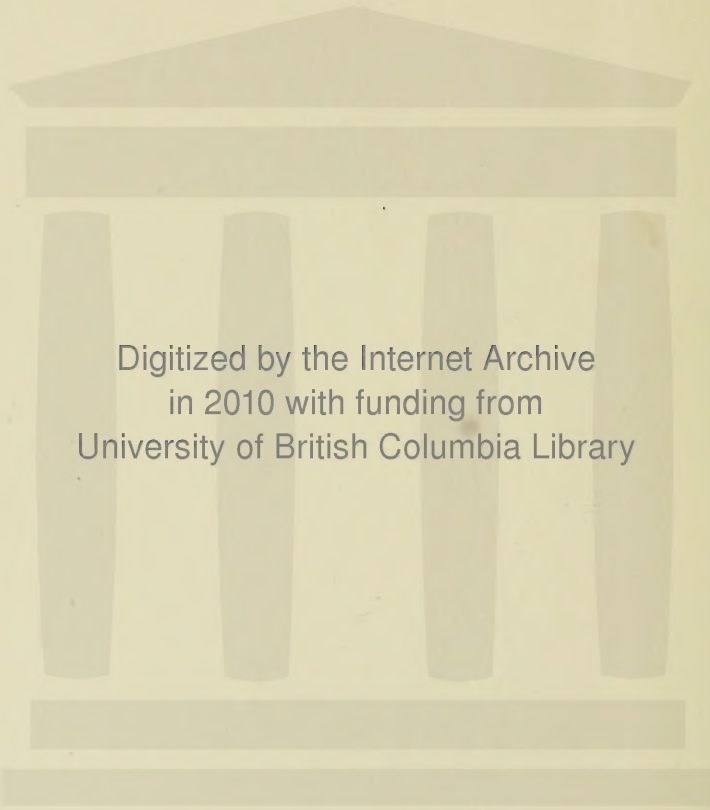
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THE LIFE OF W. J. FOX

BY RICHARD GARNETT

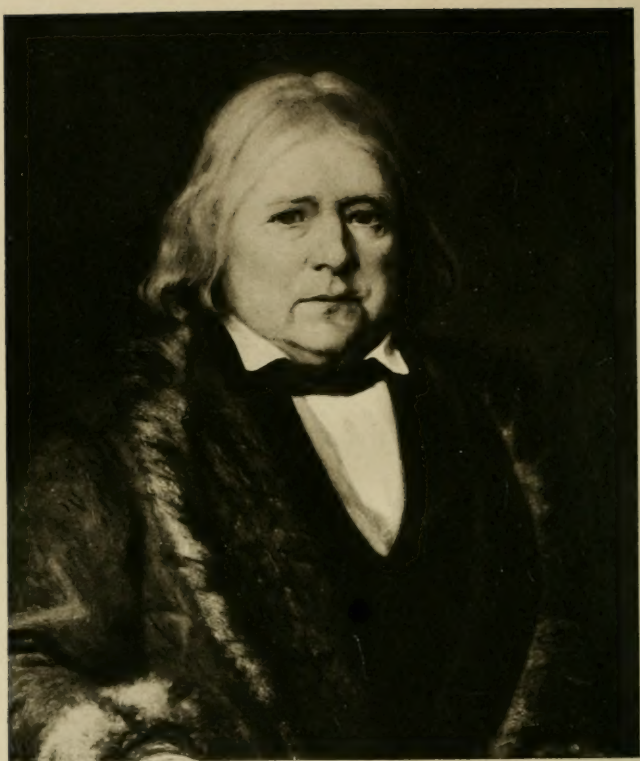
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*William Johnson Fox.
From a portrait by Buddell
in the National Portrait Gallery.*

THE LIFE OF W. J. FOX

PUBLIC TEACHER & SOCIAL REFORMER
1786-1864, BY THE LATE RICHARD
GARNETT, C.B., LL.D., CONCLUDED BY
EDWARD GARNETT, WITH SEVEN ILLUS-
TRATIONS, INCLUDING A FRONTISPIECE
IN PHOTOGRAVURE 32 32 32

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PREFATORY NOTE

ABOUT twenty years ago Mrs Bridell Fox undertook to write the biography of her father, W. J. Fox, the orator, minister, and reformer, in pursuance of a long-cherished project, which thirty years earlier, as Dr Garnett states in Chapter I., had drawn from Robert Browning the message: “. . . there would be one book better than any now to be got here or elsewhere, and all out of a great English head and heart,—those Memoirs you engaged to give us ? ” But though Mrs Bridell Fox had accumulated much MSS. material, in the shape of family letters, note-books, etc., and made copious extracts from the political and religious literature of the day that bore indirectly on Fox's many public activities, she never succeeded in digesting these records. By her will these documents passed to Dr Garnett, who had long taken an interest in the projected “ Life ” and had written the article on W. J. Fox in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

Occupied with many literary plans and projects in his latter years, Dr Garnett, at his death in April 1906, had only brought Fox's biography down to the period 1840, and the task of completing the book devolved on another hand. The present writer, who has only found broken hours to devote to the work, frankly admits that his qualifications are slight. He must plead that the documentary records, fragmentary and imperfect, should have been utilised in the 'sixties by a member of Fox's

circle, a biographer who could have supplemented the serious gaps in the personal papers by actual knowledge of the men and mental atmosphere they record. It is with this apology that Dr Garnett's last work—a literary labour of love—is given to the public. E. G.

August 1909.

INTRODUCTION

THE period covered by Fox's life, 1786-1864, is one of the most confused in our social history. We see the social organisation of the preceding century wearing out like an old garment, being patched up anew, and giving out afresh at the seams. The aristocratic governing system holds together, like some old-fashioned dam with stout and rotting timbers assailed by the long pent-up force of accumulating waters; and indeed for over sixty years (1786-1848) it defied both the democratic pressure near at hand and the backwash of the European revolutionary movements abroad. Scientific discoveries, the growth of the manufactories, and the exploitation of the industrial masses during and after the Napoleonic Wars were followed in England by a prolonged economic crisis, the final degradation of the agricultural labourer, and the battle of the land-owning class to maintain its privileges, and keep political power in its hands. Simultaneously with the rending and enforced expansion of the social order, the old faiths were confronted with new, ugly problems, and the failure of ancient creeds to find an answer for teeming social evils undermined the foundations of religious belief. Problems of reform, administrative, economic, educational, ecclesiastical, agitated all thinking heads. Literature was filled with social polemics, and writers as spiritually alien as Shelley and Dickens, Bentham and Ruskin, Carlyle and Disraeli, all were busy criticising, renovating or demolishing the old social structure. Like yeast in the national dough the pre- and early Victorian reformers, dissatisfied, fearless, conscientious spirits, were spreading everywhere

the ferment of necessary reform, by means of the press, the platform and the pulpit. Although every section of English society was represented in this heterogeneous body of men, the two groups most prominent are the working-men group and the middle class group, which, combining together for political reform up to 1832, tended, as Mr Holland Rose has shown in his admirable volume, *The Rise of Democracy*, to fall apart when "the legislation of 1833 to 1837" proved to be "wholly in favour of the newly-enfranchised middle classes." There were many men who served as links between the working-class Radical reformers and the middle-class Whig and Liberal reformers during the first half of the nineteenth century, from Bentham to Cobden, as every student of the period knows, but if we were to examine the list we should scarcely find any man's outlook so representative of the whole Reform Movement, 1820-1860, as that of W. J. Fox, Unitarian minister, popular lecturer, Radical journalist, Anti-Corn Law League orator, M.P. for Oldham, and educationalist. Not only do Fox's writings and speeches reflect back to us the atmosphere of Victorian optimism, and moral idealism of his day, the belief in science, education, the spread of knowledge, the blessings of peace, progress, free trade, etc., but his own career is typical of that social movement by which the most enterprising individuals rose from the lower to the ranks of the middle class. But it is Fox's distinction while passing into a middle-class environment, and forming friendships in a circle of distinguished men, such as Macready, John Stuart Mill, John Forster and Browning, ever and insistently to have championed the interests of the working classes from which he sprang. The description, perhaps, most pertinent of Fox's many-sided activities is "Public Teacher and Reformer," which is accordingly placed on the title page. Both as minister of Finsbury (South Place) Chapel and as a popular lecturer to the working classes, Fox had to

combat the dead-weight of conventional opinion, religious superstition and social prejudice which consigned extreme and fanatical propagandists such as Carlile the bookseller and G. J. Holyoake to the jail. Never an extremist of this type, Fox was, however, as fearless as they, and his chief work was the popularisation of humanitarian ideals and the championing of social reforms, nearly all of which have been long carried into effect, and few of which are not taken for granted, more or less, by our own generation. His work might indeed be likened to that of an architect whose building stands but whose name is forgotten. As a populariser he has shared the fate which overtakes all who disseminate the new ideas of their period, but do not originate them. Fox, as a propagandist of Social Reform, was about a generation ahead of his contemporaries, but, though a pioneer, as a thinker, critic and teacher, he was not an original genius. For this reason it is that the twelve volumes of his *Collected Works* are to-day only of interest to the student, though the *Religious Ideas*, indeed, contain many conclusions and generalisations which the professional theologians are still, unconsciously, excogitating.

It must frankly be owned by the writer that to reconstruct Fox's personality from his writings is an impossibility. The individual and personal appeal, in his oratory, has evaporated from the recorded speeches as the flavour evaporates from a wine left too long in bottle. His style is often spirited but his attitude and the treatment of his subject are specifically Victorian. To the critic indeed Fox's *Works* offer the curious spectacle of a hater of religious bigotry, political abuses and social cant being swathed in an atmosphere of Victorian moral platitude. As a popular preacher Fox took full advantage of the pleas of "moral responsibility," which were generated in the serious Victorian conscience, much as heated coal generates gas, by his audience's consciousness of the

crying social evils of its harassed period. Every generation has its special range of convictions and indeed its own necessary superstitions. The courage, fire and moral earnestness which made Fox the fearless assailant of orthodox prejudice and class interest, are the real claim his memory makes upon our generation which has inherited the legacy of their effects. None the less Fox's fame shares the fate common to that vast army of talented orators and popular preachers—he lives as a blurred shadow, as a phantom lingering in the twilight of its past triumphs.

EDWARD GARNETT.

March 1909.

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THE LIFE OF W. J. FOX

THE LIFE OF W. J. FOX

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS—HOMERTON COLLEGE—FAREHAM—
FOX BECOMES A UNITARIAN MINISTER

AT the beginning of 1858 Robert Browning, writing to congratulate William Johnson Fox upon his re-election for Oldham, thus expressed himself :—

I hate the thought of leaving Italy for one day more than I can help, and satisfy my English predilections by newspapers and a book or two. One gets nothing of that kind here but the stuff out of which books grow—it lies about one's feet indeed. Yet for me, there would be one book better than any now to be got here or elsewhere, and all out of a great English head and heart—those *Memoirs* you engaged to give us. Will you give us them ?

This appeal may probably have induced Fox to take up in this very year the reconstruction of the autobiographical fragment which in 1835 he had dictated to Eliza Flower ; and a table of intended sections prefixed to the MS. shows that the narrative was to have been carried down to 1858, and to have been concluded by a general review of the writer's life—social, religious, and political. The general

point of view is indicated by the intended title, *Reminiscences and Memorials of the Life of a Public Teacher*. The undertaking, however, advanced but very little way, and the memoir of 1835 remains the sole source of information for Fox's early life as successively weaver-boy and banker's clerk at Norwich, student for the Congregational ministry at Homerton, and champion of freedom of thought in a little Hampshire town. We cannot do better than present Fox's account, slightly abridged, of his early years.

I was born on the first of March 1786, in a farmhouse in the hamlet of Uggheshall in the parish of Wrentham in the county of Suffolk. The season was very severe, the country people for many years remembered it as the hard winter; it was very hard to me, for the pap was frozen in the spoon; and so I began life as perhaps I may end it, craving for bread and receiving a stone. Nor was this the only mischief played me by the cold weather. The servant was of course more diligent and intent upon bedwarming than usual, and forgetting the little new-comer, she one night clapped the warming pan upon the palms of my hands, and was too much frightened by my vehement remonstrance to take it off so speedily as was expedient. One of my hands bears the mark to this day, having outlasted many other scars which seemed more deep and durable, inflicted by myself when I grew old enough to burn my own fingers. My father cultivated a small farm for his mother, who was then a widow; with the exception of having been crossed in love, and writing a comedy to show that he could bear his loss, forgive his false mistress, and satirize his rival, I believe his life had been distinguished previous to his marriage by only one great adventure. The farm which he tilled either was on, or adjoined, the property of Sir Thomas Gooche, the father of Gaffer, or Granny, Gooche, who for so many years ably represented the county of "Silly Suffolk" (as the natives call it) in Parliament. He was quite as accomplished a country squire or baronet, I forget which, as his son. He was an old-fashioned Lord of the Manor. His game was abundant, he was invincibly determined to have it all to himself, at least so far as the plebeians of the neighbourhood were concerned, and he seemed to think that game

was a genus of which girls were a species, for no village damsel within reach of his hands was safer than partridge within the range of his gun. At least such was the parish scandal, as I remember to have heard it when a child. Whether his meddling with the girls had annoyed my father I don't know ; but my father's meddling with the game annoyed him, and occasioned one of those degrading persecutions, by which the landholders of this country have been accustomed to render manifest the great blessing to the community of a resident gentry. The invasion of his sovereignty over the partridge race which my father perpetrated was a very trifling one, and under circumstances of great provocation. An attack was made upon his little wheat-rick by a whole multitude, a sort of *posse comitatus* of these privileged subjects of the Lord of the Manor, and enraged at seeing them reaping where they had not sown, or rather eating where they had not even reaped, he took the liberty of dispersing the crowd by making an example, either with stick, stone, or gun, I forget which, of one of the ringleaders who was old enough to have known better. Some pick-thank fellow witnessed the transaction, and posted off to the park to give information of this unpardonable sin.

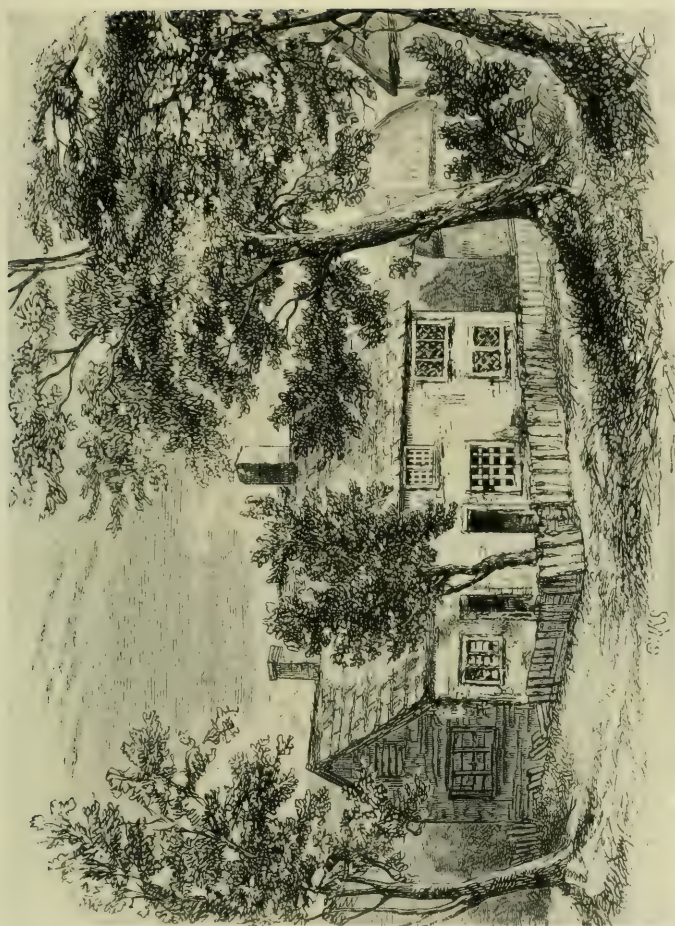
My father was made to feel that his safest course was to emigrate for a time from the dominions of the insulted dynasty of the Gooches. He took shelter in London, that great city of refuge for those who have no country. He knew nobody, he could obtain no employment, and his little stock of cash, which he could expect no remittance to renew, soon dwindled down to the last half-guinea. But he managed to turn this remnant to good account, with a facility which I, at least, have always found perfectly inimitable. As the lottery was to be drawn on the next day, he vested ten shillings of his only half-guinea in the purchase of a sixteenth, and subsisted on the sixpence till he received his share of a handsome prize. This exquisite luck not only supplied his immediate wants, but recommended him as a most appropriate person for their establishment to the keeper of the lottery office (it must have been before the time of good luck), and he became one of their clerks, in which situation the rest of his banishment passed away much more comfortably than from its commencement could have been anticipated. The adventure ended in the

regular way. Sir Thomas Gooche grew tired of being angry, or of exhibiting himself to the neighbourhood as continuing to injure a poor widow because her son had knocked down a saucy bird ; my father was allowed to return in safety to his native place and original occupation ; and, encouraged by his former success, he now ventured on the more formidable lottery of matrimony ; here also he drew a prize, and I suppose I may consider myself as the first instalment of its payment.

My mother was the eldest of five daughters of the village barber in the parish of Wrentham, who also officiated as clerk in the Calvinistic Meeting House. His vocal powers have descended to two of my brothers, but the rest of us were cut off from that inheritance, unless certain musical theories of my own may be regarded as an exception derived from this ancestral fountain.

My mother was a delicate and sensitive woman, too much so perhaps for her lot in life ; her information less confined than might have been expected, her disposition liberal, her opinions sound, and her feelings right. The physical tendencies influencing mental and moral qualities which I presume myself to have derived from my parents are, chiefly, the rather contrasted ones of nervous irritability from my mother, and, from my father, a sluggishness and tenacity of brain occasioning slowness of perception, consistent with great clearness and retentiveness when once an idea is fairly gained, and not unfrequently manifesting itself in a quiet but dogged obstinacy. Habits of reserve and an indisposition to the expression of emotions of great strength and on subjects deeply interesting to me, I derive from both parents, but this I take to be the result rather of the influence of example than of physical organization. Indeed, I think my natural tendencies are rather towards a perfect frankness of character, although not having had fair play at the outset, they have been kept under by the acquired disposition through a considerable portion of my life.

When I was three years of age my father's farming establishment was broken up, and we, with the addition of my brother Paul, removed to Norwich. I remember the journey : we travelled in one of those primitive vehicles y' clepped carrier's cart. The distance is little more than twenty miles : it



UGGLESALL FARM, NEAR WRENTHAM, SUFFOLK

occupied us through a long summer's day, "from morn till noon, from noon to dewy eve."

I was at that time learning to see. The road is at its commencement not far from the coast, and the little ships which I beheld up high in the clouds long dwelt in my young imagination. Part of the road was lined on both sides with trees visible for a considerable distance before us; and I marvelled much how we should squeeze through the end of the avenue, where I saw that they met. I had seen the sea a few months before this; the coming in of the waves frightened me abominably; nor had I any conception of its immensity. I believe I took the more distant portion of the water for land which seemed to me to hem the billows in very closely. That day was a great one to me, for introductions into elemental acquaintanceships. At its close the little town of Southwold was all ablaze with fireworks, sundry rockets being commissioned by its inhabitants to convey towards heaven the expression of their gratitude for the recovery of George the Third.

For all my other acquirements anterior to our removal to Norwich I rely on the testimony of others, who bear witness to my having been able to name every portrait (there were two in each number) in two or three volumes of the *Town and Country Magazine*. This was before I knew my letters: an attainment which I made my grandmother feel to her annoyance that I had achieved by covering her clean-swept Dutch-tiled hearth with bits of stick from the faggot-pile in the yard, broken and twisted into all the shapes of all the letters in the alphabet. This is all that I know of my infantile country life, of what I did in it, and of what it did for me.

My father's first enterprise in Norwich was, I think, the opening of a small shop, but I am not sure as to the order of his experiments, for he was not fortunate, and tried many in succession; his family increased rapidly; our removals were frequent, and we had a new house and a new brother, or sister, with great regularity about every two years. Notwithstanding his difficulties, and at times they were numerous and severe, to the best of my knowledge and belief no debts were incurred but what after a few years and from very stinted resources were faithfully and fully discharged.

A year after the removal Charles (the first) was born; he

died in infancy, and on this occasion my father made the first attempt to inform my mind as to the existence of a Heaven. It was rather premature ; years afterwards my deity was a huge old muscular man, stretched out at full length on the upper side of the solid sky, and at this time it was with great difficulty that I attained such an elevation of thought as to understand that little Charles was gone up a long way above the height to which the smoke ascended from the tallest chimneys in our street. Such was the commencement of my theological knowledge. I was soon to become very profound in it.

After a year or two's spelling with Mr Harmer in Rose Lane, of whom I only remember the oddness of his emphasis, for he used to pronounce " come to me," " come tommy," admission was procured for me into the school connected with the Independent Chapel of St George's, then under the care of Old King Cole, the father of the present alderman of that name, and who used to verify his title to the regal dignity by allowing the boys on Saturdays, when they learnt to sing, after chanting the doxology, God the Father, God the Son, etc., with due solemnity, to quicken the time of the air and praise the Trinity in jig time, and with shouts of laughter.

Here I learnt and accurately repeated twice over the Assembly's catechism, shorter and longer, and with all the Scripture proofs.

My other acquirements consisted of the three very common, but very useful, branches of learning taught in this and similar schools—*i.e.* *reading, writing, and ciphering*. It was only ciphering that I took kindly to, and there I established a reputation.

A Mr Tubby who was usher during my last year's schooling detected and patronized my "talent." He was an extraordinary man for an usher in such a school. He possessed a pair of globes, and some extraordinary books in quarto, with diagrams and engravings which must, I think, so far as I can judge from my obscure but magnificent recollections, have been numbers of some encyclopedia. He enlarged our young minds by showing us that the earth was round ; and, by his assistance and three-quarters of an hour's intense contemplation, I remember being enabled to understand an engraving in which the top of a ship's mast shows itself on the upper segment of a circle representing the globe before the hull of

the said vessel, which was nearly one-fourth as large as the representation of the globe. I understood that these were not the exact proportions.

Tubby indoctrinated me at an evening school of his own, and taught my young ideas how to shoot into the mysteries of mensuration, and even across the mighty gulf that separates arithmetic from the new and boundless world of algebra and geometry. But here the hard necessity of circumstances, for a time, checked my progress. It was needful that I should work. My father was weaving cotton on his own account. I first filled bobbins for him ; he then bought or hired another loom and I was promoted to the shuttle. This speculation failed. He took to the occupation of a walking schoolmaster ; and I was hired as errand boy by Cotton Wright, the wool-comber in St Mary's Churchyard, at the rate of 2s. a week for my mother, and 2d. for my own pocket.

Thus passed altogether between two and three years from the time of my leaving school, bringing me into the fourteenth year of my age. Of course my mind made some progress, but a very motley and irregular one. Of children's books I do not remember that I ever had any. A twopenny copy of *Chevy Chase* was my first literary purchase, an abridgment of *Robinson Crusoe* my second, and I think Bonnycastle's *Algebra* my third. Of that work I mastered several pages in the street on my way home from the bookseller's. *Philip Quarle*, *Robin Hood's Garland*, the *Memoirs of Mrs Pilkington*, a folio *Rapin*, and some odd volumes of the *Spectator* were all the books in our house besides the Bible of which I have any recollection, and with these I was thoroughly familiar. During the bobbin-filling era I had my full swing of fiction. My mother had just at that time a strong fit of novel-reading. I worked at home, and the hum of the wheel did not interrupt my hearing her read, which she did aloud. We often despatched a volume in a day. They were of all sorts, good, bad, and indifferent, but amongst their authors I should certainly still remember, even if the recollection had not been renewed since, the names of Miss Burney, Richardson and (" *Monk* ") Lewis.

I fed on novels and romances till they ceased to excite me. I then took to dramatic reading ; this did not suit my mother's taste ; our disposable funds were possibly exhausted. My

mathematical turn became more decided, and geometry and algebra were heaved, as ballast, into the vessel, whose sails had been so amply and prematurely expanded; I managed first, however, by way of a long farewell, to devour the whole of Bell's *British Theatre*, Tragedies, Comedies, Farces, and Operas.

The next seven years, from the summer of 1799 to that of 1806, were years of comparative external stability and comfort. My father in the early part of that period succeeded to the sovereignty of King Cole in the school in which I was educated.

My penmanship and arithmetic achieved a dignity which the poetry of Burns missed and lamented. "I strutted in a bank an' clarkit my cash account." Those years were passed in the banking-house of Messrs Kett & Back. This was a step on the social ladder. Directly it did something for my mind and manners, indirectly it did much more, and of more unquestionable worth, for my character. A banker's clerk is necessarily but an anomalous being: he hangs, like Mahomet's coffin, above the floor of vulgarity and below the roof of gentility.

It was not the fault of my situation if my native sheepishness did not acquire a dash of pertness, my original ignorance of the world yield to some acquaintance with cunning, if not with fraud, and my innocent simplicity be indulged with a sly bite or two of the fruit of forbidden knowledge.

Habitual and unrestrained intercourse with my associates of the desk, occasional but more regular and formal association with our employers, their families and friends, and rapid but characteristic and constantly recurring glimpses into the dispositions, habits, and modes of thought with the large variety of persons with whom business transactions brought me into contact, were a school in which even the most inattentive must have learnt something. They were altogether rather a soiled chapter in the book of human nature; but luckily I had at the same time access to fairer pages which served to restrain the impression within the limits of truth in itself, and of utility in its influence upon me. My constitutional steadiness and my readiness in accounts soon recommended me to the principals, and I was employed and trusted far beyond what was usual at my years, or in my rela-

tive position, in the establishment. But it was out of doors that the most important influences were acting upon me. I had now a little money ; my salary advanced by a graduated scale, from a nominal one of about twenty pounds per annum to sixty pounds. I could buy a few books. I had time too. The hours of business were from nine in the morning till six in the evening, and my reason exercised its prerogative of looking before and after.

There was also an hour allowed for dinner ; as the distance from home was only about a mile I generally secured half this hour for study, accomplishing the eating and the locomotion in the remaining half. It was in this way that I first digested Locke's *Essay on the Understanding*. But the mathematics were my regular pursuit. They occupied my mornings and evenings with little intermission for the first two or three years of this period. They had their share of the day too ; and the rapidity with which I could cast up the columns of the ledgers and calculate interest, occupations which had been prematurely devolved upon me on account of my peculiar aptitude, left me many odd minutes which I could appropriate without injury to my employers, still retaining a handsome surplus of merit, for the quantity of work which I despatched. In these pursuits I was joined with, guided and stimulated by, one whom I must now introduce as my first friend.

William Saint was the son of a tapster with a large family and a small business. The business was in a populous neighbourhood consisting chiefly of radical weavers, whom he organized into a branch of the London Corresponding Society, thereby endangering his own organization by the compression of that revolutionary collar which Pitt and Granville were then endeavouring to fit upon the necks of Hardy, Tooke, and Thelwall. Their acquittal (1794) saved the Norwich Saint from becoming a martyr ; and his fellow-citizens confirmed his canonization by drawing him into the town in triumph on his return.

His elder son, little William, went forth to meet him, shared the honours of the day, heard his father's tale of the Tower ; and revenge and glory conspired to stamp him a democrat for ever. Yet there were sophistries in the faith of Jacobinism which the logical mind of the future mathematician was keen enough to detect, and the perception of which subjected his

character to the enfeebling influences of political scepticism, as another circumstance, soon after, did to those of religious scepticism. He had a maternal uncle, Mr Newson, a grocer, and, at that time, a Unitarian, whose house stands where three streets meet, as his mind did where many ways meet, all of which in succession had been traversed by his versatile intellect. Mr Newson was about this time the father of four children who constituted three families, the husband of his fifth wife, and the professor of his fifteenth religion. He had belonged to almost all the sects which exist in Norwich, and that thinking town has always been able to exhibit an ample and varied assortment of *isms*. He had been churchman and dissenter, Calvinist and Arminian, Baptist and Pedit-baptist, immortal-soul-ist and soul-sleeper-ite, Trinitarian, Arian, and finally rational Christian, presbyterian, octagonite, and humanitarian, in which, or at least, disbelieving in every other system, after having contended for all, quarrelled with all, and denounced all, he at last died, and Pendelbury Houghton preached his funeral sermon, from "Mark the perfect man"; but assuredly, had his life been prolonged, it would not have been safe for any faith to attempt to "mark him for her own."

It is astonishing how dreadfully pernicious he discovered every creed to be, which only six months before had filled him with peace and joy in believing, and how atrociously mis-managed were the affairs of every congregation, with which he had been united for a twelvemonth, and which had not made him deacon or committee-man, or if the minister was monarch, viceroy over him. In his latter days there was a beautiful freshness, the symptom of a green old age, in his astonishment at the enormity of the doctrine of the Trinity, which, after having believed according to at least a dozen interpretations, he regarded with as vivacious a surprise as if he had passed all his life within the walls of Constantinople, and just heard of it from a missionary.

One Christmas day, when I was about fourteen years old, he had me to dine with him; and a humble friend of Mr Newson's came in, one of a little band that had taken tea with him in the same house for many years every Sunday, and drank sacramental wine with him, every month, through all those years in many chapels, who were always converted just after he was converted, always renounced what he rejected,

and burst away when he was offended—with hands and eyes upturned, announcing, as if it had been the appearance of a comet, that he had just heard them talking about “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons and one God,” at the Roman Catholic Chapel! On which Mr Newson oracularly observed that it was as absurd as saying that three guineas were one guinea. Miss Deborah (I believe the scrap-book was still in her hand) said to me, with one of those smiles which seemed to imply the impossibility of more than one answer to the question: “*You* do not say so, Master Fox?” I hesitated a moment, but my good angel was on duty, and after a struggle to deliver myself of a perfectly formed sentence, I replied: “Of the nature of guineas I know something, but of the nature of gods I know nothing.” A dead silence ensued, in which it was almost possible to hear the crackling of my burning cheeks. Mr Newson returned to his counting-house; Miss Deborah retired into her own thoughts; the family sat astonished at having heard the governor even by implication contradicted; and the toad-eater having no hint, did not speak, but thought that in the silence of affected contempt he was copying what in some at least was the silence of sincere respect. But to return.

This uncle’s succession of straight-jacketed faiths naturally led Saint to take to a religious great-coat which always sat rather loosely upon him. It was never drawn close, nor ever wholly cast off.

Though his information was imperfect, to me it was vast, for I could not perceive its limits. He had got amongst many sophisms, while I had scarcely reached a single syllogism. He was seven years older than myself, and had almost seen seven times as much of the world. I therefore venerated him, where he was least venerable, while I was unconsciously drawn towards him by what was most estimable—by his kindness, by his attachment to myself (where all the advantage save that of benevolence was on my side), the intellectual character of his ambition, and a warm and glowing atmosphere of feeling which surrounded his mind like a halo. We became inseparable. We met in the summer by five o’clock in the morning to study mathematics together till eight; we read philosophy and history together during half our allotted dinner-hour; we learnt Latin together three evenings in the week of old

Fransham, and the other three evenings we walked together in the fields, or over the then un-inclosed Mousehold Heath, talking of mathematicians who had gained renown, at whom their fellow-townsmen would point, saying "that's he"; and these aspiring colloquies uniformly ended with one asking "why should not we achieve this?" and the other answering "why not?" The often-repeated "why not?" at length became ridiculous to ourselves, and the ridicule stung us to a pledge of redoubled and continued exertion in the form of a solemn league and covenant, to pursue the mathematical sciences devotedly for seven years. The document still exists, and runs thus:—

"We, the undersigned, being fully convinced of the advantages arising from a steady perseverance in any course of study, and conceiving that the mathematical sciences, not only from their extensive utility, but from their intrinsic excellence, are the most worthy of our exertions, do, this day, June 7, 1803, solemnly pledge ourselves to read the following course of Mathematics, and to continue extending our knowledge in those sciences till June the seventh, one thousand eight hundred and ten.

"WILLIAM SAINT.

"WILLIAM JOHNSON FOX."

This engagement was faithfully and zealously observed until the separating courses of our lives subjected it to inevitable interruption. Saint married and removed to Woolwich, and I became religious and looked forward to the ministry. Of course along with my reading and studying I fledged my wings in composition. My earliest efforts were inspired by a certain Eliza Eldon, a pale, meek, quiet kind of a girl, about my own age, who lived in the neighbourhood, and died young of consumption. They were in the conventional style which I had learned from novels; nor were my boy's nerves much acted upon in this matter, of which I remember no other expression, except the gift of a half-crown pocket-book, a large sum for my finances, which were only recruited, at the time, by the allowance of twopence a week. I must have been about thirteen years old when this was at its height, for I remember lying awake one night and making an elaborate calculation

of the months and weeks in the eight years which I thought must elapse before I might marry Eliza Eldon. Before half that time was over I wrote her elegy. I never saw nor knew much of her, but most of my juvenile versifications had a similar origin. In my fourteenth and fifteenth years I manufactured them rather freely. When magpies died, handkerchiefs were lost, or pleasure parties disappointed by the rain, I wrote elegies—and very sad ones. Every face that I liked I fancied myself crossed in love with, for the sake of stanzas about cruelty and despair; and for birthdays I had congratulatory odes, of which one of the best, though bad enough even for a boy, was addressed to the cleverest woman whom I then knew, Elizabeth May Carlton Parlour. In 1800 a democratical newspaper was established at Norwich, called the *Iris*, and during the alarm of invasion which prevailed soon after, I was enrolled in the volunteer rifle corps, and I wrote an ode to my rifle which bore the inspiring mark of No. 45, which being accepted by the Editor of the *Iris*, I became a frequent poetical contributor during the two years of its continuance. My contributions were always signed P. L., by which I meant *Philo Libertas*; except one about a nightingale, to which I attached the initials of Sophia Parlour (afterwards Mrs Saint), who was then living in the country, and whose notice I hoped to attract by that means. But versifying, though I had a temporary rage for it, never came naturally to me. I have little or no mechanical aptitude in any department.

Fox was now approaching what may not unfairly be considered the most important incident of his life, since from it all the rest were to derive. He was about to exchange the Norwich bank for the theological college at Homerton, with a view to the Independent ministry. The operating motives were probably too complex to have been easily unravelled even by himself, and the section of his autobiography which might in some measure have cleared them up was never written. There is no reason to doubt his having been under the influence of what would have been called serious impressions. His tempera-

ment was always religious, and in his then stage of development religious impressions could only be stated in the terms of Calvinistic theology. Preaching, moreover, whether by tongue or pen, was entirely natural to him, and his allotted method of influencing mankind. His was not, like Sterling's, a case of mistaken vocation, but one of attempted entrance by a wrong door. At the same time it may be questioned whether such motives would have prevailed with him without the rise in social consideration, the more abundant leisure for study, and the contentment of his parents and friends, who doubtless urged him to aspire to clerkship in the widest sense of that once august term. A certain "Marion," whose name appears in his notes made for the projected Autobiography probably influenced his decision. Thirty years afterwards Fox thought he could paint Marion's light brown hair, full lips, and bright colour, if only he could paint anything; he further lauds her energy, frankness, and vivacity. He walked and talked with her in the dusk of eve and in the early morn, when, wakened by the rattle of pebbles cast up to her window-sill, she descended from her bower. All was very pretty and innocent, but Fox seems to indicate that after the first flush of youthful feeling had faded, the bond of intellectual sympathy proved to be wanting. A latent suspicion that it might be so had deterred him from vowing to win her; he had nevertheless gone so far as to record a promise (made, however, solely to himself) that he would never marry anyone else: and the pain of disillusion may have been one of the agencies which one autumn afternoon in 1806 seated him on the top of the London coach, as raw a piece of material as was ever confided to a college to be manufactured into a divine.

It was on a fine day in the first week of September 1806, at two o'clock in the afternoon, that, with about £10 in my

pocket and all sorts of wonderments and speculations in my head, I mounted on the outside of a lumbering double-bodied coach for my first great journey. I had never before been more than thirty miles from Norwich, and now I was to see London, and "all the fair domain between that lies." I believe I spoke not to my fellow passengers, nor they to me, the whole way. I have always hated talking companions in journeying. At that time, moreover, there was my invincible bashfulness and awkwardness, my habitual reserve, and the utter strangeness of the situation. So that, as Leigh Hunt says, "God knows what the coachman thought of me"—to which I may add, the guard and passengers. They doubtless reckoned me as very a half-baked cake as ever was kneaded. And yet all that time and under that lumpish exterior there was a pretty considerable fermentation going on within. I yet distinctly remember the first start of the horses, and all the last looks at the objects we passed and at the Castle, and at the spire of the Cathedral that we did not pass, and how I felt the rapid diminution of that part of the road which was familiar to me as a walk, the two or three miles which had bounded my rambles at one time with Marian and at another time with Saint, and after the awful boundary of the known and the unknown was overpassed, how welcome everything was to me of which I had any knowledge by picture or description. It was pleasant to me that we stopped at the "Cock" at Attleborough, for it was a familiar name which I had heard over and over again from the farmers every Saturday market-day for years. I was at home there. Then my eyes dwelt lovingly as long as they could on the little conical hill with the one tree at the top at Thetford, the tree on which they hanged the county criminals. For that hill was the vignette on the notes of the Thetford bank, and few days had passed on which my eyes had not rested on it there. I also remember distinctly the sunset of that day. It was a clear, cloudy day, bright and warm, with clouds that were sheltering and not threatening. The sun rested behind one of them about half an hour before he went down, and pitched over such lots of splendid rays that my eyes were fixed and my mind revelled in its solitary sensation of beauty. It was simply my seeing this common appearance to more advantage from being quite free of town and town associations, for the scenery was merely

the common scenery of Norfolk, where a ditch is a river and a molehill a mountain. It was the sky that I saw, the sky in the country with those beautiful beams from an unseen sun stretching their bright rods from Heaven to earth. I do not remember much more till morning came, and I began to feel that we were approaching London, which, of course, I felt at a very sufficient distance. I believe we had scarcely cleared Epping before I instructed the guard to take my luggage out of the boot and have it in readiness for me to take off the coach, as I should leave them before they entered London—videlicet, at Hackney Churchyard. And for Hackney Churchyard did I diligently look out all the way through Woodford and Walthamstow, where I wondered that no one had told me of the pond, and through Clapton, being strangely troubled occasionally as I observed the thickening white brick houses on both sides of the road (the white bricks were a novelty to me, neither white brick nor stucco had then broken the red continuity of Norwich), lest I should have passed the place of my destination. The emotion was two or three times so strong as to unloosen my faltering tongue, but the answered assurance even when repeated did not satisfy me, for I could plainly perceive that neither guard nor coachman had a proper sense of the importance of the inquiry. The last long hour, however, did at last “wind slow away”; I knew the old Tower by the description which Mr Penn had given me. I shouted to the coachman to stop the moment we came in sight of it, having thereby several yards further to carry my trunk than was necessary. And so ended the first of many journeys. I made my way duly to the iron gate of Old College, Homerton, and rang the bell with a palpitating heart. It was about seven o'clock in the morning. The servant called Dr Smith from his study, who was not exactly my notion of a theological tutor; but no matter for that. I knew that he was, and that was awful enough, and I have no doubt I stammered and spoke huskily in reply to his welcome.

And now began a new journey yet more strange and further afield than that which I had completed. Among the strangest of my first feelings were apprehension, helplessness, and home-sickness. I had been accustomed to do nothing for myself. To have to see after my own tea-makings and washings and mendings was actually formidable to me. From each new

occupation (and how many in succession presented themselves) my heart shrank and sunk within me. There were but two new students besides myself. The rest were all old companions to one another. I had never imagined so utter a loneliness as I felt. I was, moreover, nervously apprehensive of ridicule, and very seriously satisfied that on many points I was a fair object of ridicule. Being the junior student, and Dr Smith always officiating either at morning or evening prayers, it was a whole blessed three weeks before my dreaded turn was to come for that duty, the students taking it in rotation. But though the praying time happily moved as slow towards me as the hour hand of a clock, there was something else which came rapidly and ceaselessly ticking in one's ears like the minute hand. I mean the blessings, or graces, which also came in rotation, the circulation often expedited by the absence of some or other of the students from some meal or other, and of which blessings or grace we had eight per diem. This there was no avoiding. Even the sacrifice of a meal or two would afford but a brief respite. It was when we were congregated at tea on the third or fourth day that I looked round me in vain for a senior to bless the table. I fear I committed the hypocrisy of affecting not to be aware it was my turn till I was made to remember it. We were sitting about an oblong deal table in the hall; it stood on the side nearest the window, and I was about half-way down on that side of it, from the head of the table. I was, therefore, quite surrounded. There were students on each side of me and opposite. I could not have bolted if I would. They all rose, as I did too, with my head rather giddy and my eyes shut before I was up, and the first syllables which were rattling in my throat sounded like thunder in my ears. I did get through, what I said I know not. It was no time for the ingenuity with which we used to vary these formulas, but after standing with my eyes shut till they had all sat down, I half opened them, stealing a glance in every direction to see who were smiling, and how much. I knew that I should be laughed at, and I knew that I was, and this furtive, timid, inquiring, deprecatory look of mine, after any performance of this kind, actually became habitual to me, until that also became itself the subject of notice and of burlesque. These lesser trials were far worse than the greater ones. When that came, I got through pretty well. It had

indeed what one of them called "an awful pause, prophetic of its end," but there was a beginning, a middle and an end to it, and it passed muster in the college devotions. My voice on these occasions (which I believed myself to know was naturally unpleasant, monotonous, coarse and incapable of modulation) was also feeble, broken, internal and often scarcely audible at the other end of the room. The impression it gave others was beginning to work in me a reflected conviction of my destitution of the physical requisites for a preacher. Discouragement and strangeness were thus thickening around me. No child at his first school was ever more a child. Every hour of every day I was shrinking from what was about me and feeling the absence of what I had left. Often did I go to my little box of a study, a place about five feet square, with a deal desk, a stool and one bookshelf, and throw my arms on my desk and my head on my arms, and weep. I could not bear it. And but for very shame I should at the fortnight's end have planted myself in the old Churchyard of Hackney to mount again the double-bodied "Expedition," on its homeward road. Go there to see it I did, again and again. I wanted to see someone within it or upon it whom I knew, and failing that it was something to see the old coach itself. There was, I found, a fortnight's vacation at Christmas—*i.e.* the Lectures ceased for that time, though it was not usual for students to leave the college except such as lived in the immediate neighbourhood. However, I very soon rather surprised the tutor in some conversation which had a prospective tendency, by mentioning that particular circumstances would make it absolutely necessary for me to go down to Norwich at Christmas.

Except for an anecdote to be quoted in another place Fox gives no personal details respecting his residence at Homerton College beyond this graphic picture of the feelings of a shy, sensitive youth thrown among uncongenial surroundings and aware that he is incurring ridicule by his inexperience and unlikeness to his fellow-students. Had the reconstructed version of his autobiography been written as intended, the college would probably have suffered disparagement, for in the list of subjects to be

treated occurs, "Humbug of college teaching." To what particular aspect of the curriculum this was to have applied remains uncertain. No reflection can have been designed upon the principal instructor in classics and divinity, Dr Pye Smith, author of *The Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*, a standard work on the orthodox side of the Trinitarian controversy, and, later, a successful mediator so far as comported with the religious atmosphere of the period, between Genesis and geology. The next entry in Fox's syllabus, "House meeting and rebellion," apparently relates to intestine troubles which may or may not have partaken of the nature of a "barring-out," but with which Fox does not appear to have been concerned except as a spectator. He would doubtless have caused Dr Smith perturbation if Dr Smith had caught him at cards, as it appears that he might have done if the young whist players had not been stronger in tricks than in honours. Their delinquencies remained concealed, and when they came to light years afterwards, Dr Smith was able to declare:—"Never had I the least suspicion that any Homerton student had descended to that worst of all murderings of time." When some years afterwards Smith published his *Scripture Testimony* he was compelled to confess the mortification with which he had seen many of his pupils become Unitarians. His opponent, Belsham, naturally considered this a special sign of grace. Smith, quite as naturally, thought that if it was, it was the only one of which these misguided youths gave any token. "But the amplest evidence had established to me that the precursors of the avowed change of sentiment were generally extreme levity, pride, rashness, self-conceit, indolence, scepticism, concealed improprieties of conduct, neglect of prayer, scorning *at* serious piety and fraudulent imposition by pretending orthodox sentiments." Fox being the most conspicuous among the deserters, it was inferred that this scathing indictment was intended for

his particular benefit, and he was obliged to represent to Pye Smith that not only had he quitted college with a highly complimentary Latin testimonial, but that Smith himself, much to his honour, had written of him after his adoption of Unitarian sentiments: "While he was a student I had reason to speak highly of his temper, conduct and attainments, and I am not to be deterred by the injurious construction which some persons may put upon my declaration from avowing my persuasion of his veracity and integrity." Smith promptly explained that his strictures had no reference to Fox, and the friendly relation between teacher and student remained unbroken during their lives.

Just before Smith's death in 1851, he is found corresponding with his old pupil, then a Member of Parliament, on matters affecting the secular interests of the Dissenting bodies. If, however, Fox refrained from openly troubling the Homerton Israel, he could not be unaffected by the spirit of religious unrest which he found to prevail there. This was not indeed very tumultuous, or generally in the long run attended with evident results, but it was sufficient to impair the relations of perfect candour which ought to have obtained between student and pastor. It was chiefly marked, he says, in the middle period of the young men's curriculum. They usually arrived too much under the influence of recent strong religious impressions to be in any mood for inquiry, and for the year previous to their ordination and settlement, stood too much in awe of the deacon; to whom and not the minister, the custody of the orthodoxy of a Nonconformist congregation would seem to be entrusted: as, according to Swift, in his *Directions to Servants*, the honour of a family is deposited, by no means with the paterfamilias, but with the butler, the coachman and the groom. "In the next year they began to preach, and the mind pulled up as the tongue began to canter." In extenuation of the young

men's forwardness as undergraduates, it must be remembered that at Homerton they actually were studying theology, of which, had they been at the university, the future divines would not in that age have heard a word. The only hint of an influence disposing Fox to unorthodox speculation is afforded by the heading of one of his unwritten sections, "Influence of Warburton." Warburton's argument that, as Sir Leslie Stephen expresses it, "because the Jewish religion does not contain an essential doctrine it must have been supported by an extraordinary providence" is certainly of a piece with that which made the Jew in Boccaccio a Roman Catholic, but was more likely to unsettle than to confirm young men who like Fox in his then stage of development were satisfied with the arguments already provided for them. The heading of another intended section of his autobiography might seem indicative of spiritual unrest, but "Trials" probably does not denote mental struggles but trial sermons, which must have been delivered in 1809. In an entry in his diary made in 1813, Fox attests his having "moved listening crowds to trickling tears" at "the old Meeting, the Tabernacle, Ashford, Southampton, Southend," and these can only have been probationary exercises. Another place where he certainly preached before his settlement at Fareham was Witham, the residence of the Pattisons, the excellent friends of Crabb Robinson so frequently mentioned in his diary. In recording his observation that almost every orthodox person of mind or talent intimately known to him had some one heretical proclivity, "something *in petto*, to be kept in the mind like a proscribed book under the cushion, to be confidentially drawn out in a secure *tête-à-tête*," Fox adds "the only one with whom I can connect in my recollection no doctrinal aberration whatever, was Mrs Pattison. She had a strong, childish, nervous horror of heresy. The apprehension resembled the effect produced by violent fright in some

constitutions, and such was probably its origin." He continued nevertheless on intimate terms with the Pattisons after his adoption of Unitarian opinions, and his regard for both mother and daughters was nothing short of enthusiastic. From a long letter dated in March 1810, to a friend named Blood, an engraver, whose name and profession, and Irish connections, seem to bespeak him of kin to Fanny Blood, the adored friend of Mary Wollstonecraft, whose brother was an artist, Fox would appear to have been settled at Fareham, Hampshire, in 1809, though he did not receive his final certificates from Homerton until April 1810. He has been long enough at Fareham to deem himself entitled to a short holiday in the Isle of Wight, and to interest himself seriously in the education of a deaf and dumb girl, Mary Franklin. "I taught her the other day the difference between seeing, dreaming and thinking, which she understood with great facility. By thinking, however, she means no more at present than recollection. I believe these are the first words she has been made to understand, except merely the names of objects. What a fine opportunity would this be for an observer who had not five sermons a week to preach, to increase our knowledge of the operations of that curious machine the human mind!"

The demand for five sermons a week might alone justify Fox in deeming the Fareham connection "unpromising"; the main disquiet, however, was the unsettled condition of his own theological opinions. The points which mainly concerned him were those controverted between Trinitarians and Unitarians, and between Calvinists and Arminians. For a time he seemed to have found a middle course, acknowledging the Deity of Christ but explaining it as the effect of the indwelling of the Father. But after a while this ceased to satisfy. "I saw that I could not stop where I was. It was amid deprecations and agitations that I pursued my enquiries; external

expressions of what was going on did but occasion coldness, suspicion, alienation, my path was through dark valleys shaken by an earthquake ; it seemed as if there were a spell on me and I must go on, feeling that I was going wrong, toiling to arrive at the abandonment of heaven and diligently working out my own damnation. The investigation became more and more fascinating. It was as if I was under a spell ; I thought, criticised, discussed (mentally) and read controversy with insatiableness. The work went on day and night : I used to take books on the Unitarian controversy to bed with me and read them for hours with the candle on my pillow." The only persons from whom he could expect sympathy were the Unitarians, with whom he himself had little sympathy. " My previous impressions were against them. I thought they had very little religion and that they were very cold and critical. I knew that they read sermons, which I thought showed little earnestness ; and that they read prayers, which I regarded as perfectly unnatural." He would have preferred to have carried on the church at Fareham as an unsectarian congregation with Virtue, not Faith, as the bond of union agreeably to the precept of Robert Robinson. " I thought in my simplicity that some of these people whom I knew to have gone about as far as I had then gone, long before I went so far myself, would have stood by me. The simple soul that I was ! " This appears to have been early in 1811, when an independent society was formed at Fareham under Fox's pastorate, but could not be maintained. It was not till 1812 that Fox found himself fully in harmony with Unitarian doctrine, but having by that time seen his way to discard the dogma of eternal punishment—in our own day commonly the first to go, in his case the last—he naturally gravitated towards a body from which no difference of sentiment any longer estranged him. Temperament was another matter. Fox was and always

must be very diverse from the type of excellence presented by the Belshams, Asplands, Carpenters, and other admirable representatives of the Unitarianism of the pre-Martineau epoch. The necessarian philosophy which was the basis of their theology might be accepted in words with all good faith, but transplanted to an ardent and poetical mind changed its nature while preserving its form. A highly interesting disquisition might be written upon the contrasts presented in the bosom of Unitarianism between its hereditary representatives, the lineal descendants of the old Presbyterians, and its recruits from Romanism, Anglicanism and orthodox Nonconformity. The Unitarians of Fox's day meanwhile were quite ready to welcome an eloquent ally who had testified and suffered in the cause of free inquiry, and by the middle of 1812 Fox found himself preaching before the Southern Unitarian Society at Portsmouth, and settled as minister of the congregation in Baffin's Lane, Chichester. His personal history between his settlement at Fareham and his installation at Chichester is almost a blank, but that he lay on no bed of roses may be surmised from this significant entry in the diary he began to keep irregularly in the latter place :—

Sep. 29, 1812. On Saturday T. — and M. — brought £78 from Portsmouth, which closes the Fareham account to my great joy. Seriously indeed will I consider before ever again I am concerned in dividing congregations and building chapels.

Clearly Fox's sins had found him out, but the antidote came with the bane. The T. of the above entry was William Taylor, son of the Rev. Henry Taylor, the liberal Vicar of Portsmouth in the eighteenth century, author of *Ben Mordecai's Apology for embracing Christianity*, and grandfather of the late Peter Alfred Taylor, long Member for Leicester. Mr Taylor was then

travelling on behalf of the Courtaulds, the great crape manufacturers at Bocking and Braintree (afterwards Courtauld & Taylor), whose munificence was afterwards to assure the comfort of Fox's declining days, and his son and grandson were to be Fox's lifelong friends and his sheet anchors in many a tempest. Fox wrote as follows to the son on 2nd March 1850, a few days before the latter's death :—

Whatever is before you, and wishes are worthless as to that, my own existence and consciousness in this life and the future can never lose the deep traces of your wise and kindly agency. These, and other feelings too, bear the broad stamp of continuity as well as the Principle of Life, of which indeed they become a portion.

Dear friend, God bless and strengthen you ; our course is still onward even through and beyond the shadowy path.

And again he writes :—

My thoughts are so much with you that I must give them some brief expression. Would to heaven that my sympathy in all you suffer could be as availing as your sympathy and counsel would have been to me in my present undertaking¹ had you been able to render them. I have missed them very much and very often.

But our paths are chosen and marked out for us. And perhaps the inevitable law which imposes public activity on me and passive endurance on your more energetic temperament may be a providential training for both, and have its results and relations in that unseen futurity towards which we are advancing. The final step into that futurity must needs be solitary. Yet it is something to take it with the double assurance of over-ruling Benignity unfailing and infinite ; and of surrounding sympathy, deep and affectionate though helpless to aid.

In a further section of his autobiography, the last written, Fox examines the moral and intellectual character-

¹ The Education Bill.

istics of evangelical dissent among the lower middle and the poorer classes, as exemplified by the congregations he had known at Norwich and Fareham. As he had himself forsaken this type of religion a highly favourable estimate cannot be expected. It is nevertheless distinguished by evident candour, and is exempt from the particular bias which would have vitiated the judgment of a member of the Church of England, an institution of whose existence this autobiography does not afford the slightest hint.

It is pity [he says] but that the religious world were more laid open to the philosophical. There is much in it that deserves to be studied. Probably no one who has not been in it, and in it not merely as an observer but as of it also, can avoid a good many mistakes about the kind of life which is led by so many hundred thousands of our countrymen. I first venerated that world, then sported in it, then loathed it, and only after a long while learned to look back upon it with charity. Complacency in it, as affording anything like a beautiful or tolerable development of human nature, I never can feel. But its defects are not exactly those which have sometimes been ascribed to it. The vulgar infidels who believe the dissenting parsons preach simply to get money and that dissenting tradesmen have only such consciences as may serve to festoon their counters and attract customers, is altogether wrong. I believe this gross mercenary self-avowed hypocrisy to be comparatively rare. The evangelical world is purity itself in this matter compared with many political and professional classes composed of *gentlemen* and *men of honour*. Nevertheless, there is among them hypocrisy, and that of a disgusting character. It chiefly relates to two things, opinions and amusements.

Fox's observations upon the former subject may be easily conjectured, the latter he illustrates by anecdotes from his own experience at Homerton :—

Everybody knows how rigorously cards and the theatre are proscribed by Evangelicalism. I learned to play whist within

the walls of Homerton College and went thence on the first theatrical expedition from the time of my conversion. Both became not infrequent practices, the former with about six or eight of the students, the latter with about a dozen, the whole number being from fourteen to eighteen or thereabouts. Our usual place was the two shilling gallery. We thought it more secure from observation than the pit. Three of us one night found one or more students from the rival orthodox institution of Hoxton at our elbows, and I have heard of similar rencontres in other generations of students of the two academical houses. There was so much conscientiousness in this sinning of mine, that once, having walked the entire distance from Homerton to Covent Garden, about six miles, and finding that a play of Shakespeare's that I had come to see had been changed for some modern comedy which I thought might not come within the scope of my moral toleration, I turned round and walked back again.

Before entering at Homerton, Fox had been advised by orthodox friends at Norwich to go to the theatre but to say nothing about it. This "disproportionate importance attached to abstinence from worldly amusements" is accounted for by the abstinence having come to be regarded as a soldier regards his colours, intrinsically of little worth, inestimable as a symbol.

It is supposed to be a badge, the pledge of loving Christ.

Orthodox religion does not include a consistent system of morals, it is not an arrangement of means for the formation and elevation of character, it is merely a state of mind and feeling. The progress of this state may imply fervour, zeal, abstraction, but it does not build up intelligence, does not develop the faculties, does not humanise and raise the entire character, nor shape it for public usefulness; it does not tend towards the expansion of our nature in the individual. It takes little account of man upon the earth in the aggregate. Its bearing on conduct is feeble, irregular and incidental. It can and does in a very high degree co-exist with the culpable neglect of the mental faculties, the absence of many of the most pleasure-giving social qualities, with fierce dogmatism and

persecution, and with dead indifference to political interests. I cannot regard it as a blessing to the world.

The century which has elapsed since Fox first thought of the ministry has beheld many mutations in evangelical Nonconformity. Indifference to politics is not a charge likely in our day to be brought against Nonconformists. It may be observed, however, that the causes which chiefly interest them are generally such as admit of effective advocacy from the pulpit. That there was something both very right and very wrong about the Nonconformity of Fox's day, considered from the patriot's and the philanthropist's points of view, may be inferred from the fact that it was the most determined opponent both of slavery and of public education.

CHAPTER II

CHICHESTER—MARRIAGE—PARLIAMENT COURT CHAPEL—
ILLNESS—SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL—THE WESTMINSTER
REVIEW

FROM the middle of 1812 Fox ceases to be the mere explorer either of the regions of speculation or of practical life. He has fought his way through religious difficulties to a creed for the present identical with the old school Unitarianism of Priestley and Belsham, and, renouncing the endeavour to organise the worshippers of Virtue into a *corps d'élite* independent of any existing denomination he has gravitated into the pastorate of a Unitarian flock. Twenty years were yet to elapse ere he should acquire influence in politics or distinction in literature ; the intervening period is one of preparation, mostly unconscious, and of the shaping of a distinguished career by occurrences apparently accidental, but all converging towards their destined end. The autobiography which would have been so useful to enliven and interpret this uneventful period here fails us ; but until Fox's marriage in 1820 the deficiency is in part made up by a journal, supplemented by letters to the lady who became his wife, in compliance with whose injunctions copious extracts from diary and correspondence were printed by her children in 1869. Fox's ultimate estrangement from the Unitarians rendered him careless about recording the occurrences of these years, and but for the aids we have named their history would have been little but a register.

The congregation of which Fox now found himself pastor was one of a type frequent among the Unitarian churches in the south of England. Originally Presbyterian, it had become Congregationalist from the decay of Presbyterian jurisdiction, and its orthodoxy had not been found proof against free inquiry. It might have been difficult to indicate the precise period when this change took place: all that can be affirmed with certainty is that the Westminster Catechism, better suited to the seventeenth than to the eighteenth century, had disappeared some time in the course of the latter. The like had befallen most of the old Presbyterian churches throughout England, and had generally been accompanied by a notable refrigeration of religious zeal. As the descendants of the ancient Vikings are now the most peaceable people in Europe, so the representatives of the Puritans who in the seventeenth century overthrew monarchy and episcopacy were now moderate in doctrine and practice, and aggressive, if in any way, merely from, the assumption of superior enlightenment. Their boast as is often the case, revealed their weak point; disdaining appeal to any tribunals less august than those of Reason and Truth, they found themselves hopelessly distanced by the churches whose appeal was mainly to the feelings. Fox soon discovered that he neither wielded the influence which he had exercised nor effected the good which he had achieved while a Calvinist. He writes on 28th March 1813:—

What a useless life I am leading! How much good my Sunday labours do God only knows; they have not made—devout, nor—humble; nor—leave off swearing, nor—intelligent. Shall I say, Oh that it were with me as in months past, when the candle of orthodoxy shone upon me? Shall I call up the times when listening crowds heard with visible emotion, when trickling tears proclaimed the vividness of the feelings, the pathos of my eloquence, the power of grace?

Shall I think of the Old Meeting, the Tabernacle, Ashford, Southampton, Southend, Fareham ? ”

Unable, nevertheless, to renounce his honest convictions, he concludes that the success of the teachers whom he regards as mistaken and fanatical is owing to the general ignorance of their congregations, and hails Bell and Lancaster as the pioneers of Priestley and Belsham. “Till the public ear is accessible to our yet hated doctrines, we must be content to labour in the sphere which Providence has granted.” The diary is full of self-reproach on the score of indolence, which seems unmerited, as it contains abundant evidence of a close study of Greek in the New Testament and Herodotus, and of ecclesiastical history in the pages of Mosheim. As time proceeds, Fox’s reading becomes more extensive and less exclusively theological. At the end of 1814 he reports himself as having read 180 books during the year, a large proportion, indeed, novels ; but even for these he had something to show if it be the fact that he closed Godwin’s *St Leon* “with a feeling of perfect reconciliation to my mortal destiny.”

Domestic troubles had probably something to do with Fox’s depression of spirits. On 12th January 1813, he writes in his diary :—

My mother is a widow and we are fatherless. God of mercy, be thou our protector and portion. Oh my father, my debt of gratitude to thee is now unpaid for ever. One parent remains, whom I should support and cherish ; brothers and sisters whom I should instruct and aid, but how ? I see not as yet, yet the searcher of hearts knows it is not from want of readiness to such a duty.

For some time he continued to be troubled by a consciousness that this duty was ill discharged. On 28th March he writes :—

Why talk I of public good ? Have I not private obligations—a mother, brothers, and sisters—fatherless ? Yes, and a stripling supports them while I foolishly get into debt, and neither help them nor vindicate my own independence.

These must have been but passing clouds. We hear nothing more of debt ; and after a while Fox is found assisting to settle “the stripling”—his brother Charles—in London ; while his relations with his mother and his sister Sarah were singularly affectionate, as will abundantly appear in the sequel. Another real affection, less genuine but destined to exert a profounder influence on his career, was occupying much of his time and thoughts. The object was his future wife, Eliza Florance, whose father, James Florance, as a barrister, probably occupied a social position superior to that of most members of Fox’s congregation. At all events his diary affords no evidence of Fox’s having been on terms of intimacy with any other family ; nor is there any hint of the existence of any young lady in Chichester except Miss Florance, in the least eligible as the bride of a Unitarian minister, excluded as such would be alike from the Church society of a cathedral city and from the circles of orthodox dissent. At Fox’s settlement in Chichester, Eliza Florance was eighteen, having been born on 17th December 1793. It is not surprising that the two should ere long have become the subject of gossip, and that in May 1813 Fox should have received a warning, apparently from the pater-familias himself, for “prudential reasons.” Denying that the admonition was called for, he proceeds thus to describe “this reputed object of my passion” :—

Her form is good, her features pretty, her eyes blue, her hair brown, nobody will call her beautiful, all will allow her to be a fine girl. She is not destitute of feeling, delicacy, talent, information or goodness. Yet not particularly sensible, refined, clever, intelligent, or capable probably of any very

exalted virtue. Her greatest fault is vanity, her greatest charm is an apparent frankness. She will never excite an enthusiastic passion, yet she may be very well loved.

In June comes a little misunderstanding and reconciliation, with the inevitable consequences. By 5th July Fox admits that "his foolish heart is playing around a flame that will consume it." On 29th July he exclaims: "What a nondescript connection is ours! what a *mélange* of love and friendship! What affection, what folly, what vanity, what weakness, what inconsistency on both sides! What a fool am I to flutter round this blaze and find amusement in burning myself! It must not be. Yet the dear delight of loving and being loved! How much, how great a relief to the heartless life I lead here! But it must not be." It was to be, nevertheless, and the clue to the situation as it regarded Fox is given in his complaint of the "heartless life" he was leading. His nature was warm and affectionate, and craved a sympathy of which, narrowed as his social outlook was by sectarian animosities, Chichester offered or seemed to offer him in Eliza Florance alone. Fox, at all events, then deemed her capable of this sympathy, and soon glided into a style of address which would justify Miss Florance in considering herself virtually engaged, though there can have been no formal betrothal. If any "semi-engagement" there was, it came to an end on 31st August 1815, when Fox notes in his diary: "My connection with E. terminated by her sacrificing her own feelings to her father's prudence." She had, then, given him up: and well for both parties would it have been if the separation could have been complete, but this was hardly possible with persons necessarily thrown into each other's society; and they continued in a dangerous and embarrassing because indefinite situation, neither bond nor free. Mr Florance's caution was not unjustifiable; he appears to

have been himself on the brink of a pecuniary crisis, and the family at Norwich must have been a constant drain upon the slender resources of Fox. Fox seems to have looked to theological authorship as a resource: his answer to his old preceptor, Pye Smith's *Scripture Testimony* (1813) had done him high credit: some of his sermons, he says, are in his own and others' judgment worthy of publication; and he meditates a treatise on the final restoration of all men. This design was probably relinquished upon the appearance (1816) of the *Philosophy of the Divine Government* of his subsequent friend and coadjutor, Dr Southwood Smith. Notices of his life at Chichester grow very scanty, but a slight stimulus is given to his correspondence with Miss Florance by absences at Birmingham and at Norwich. The former, a preaching tour, includes a visit to Stratford-on-Avon, which occasions Fox to record an instance of the curious mental lethargy inherited from his father: "Saw Stratford on the direction-posts as we rumbled along, and read it like any other word, as we came up to it, saw a soft-flowing river winding before the green, and immediately felt such a thrill! Why, this is Shakespeare's birthplace! All in a moment it became consecrated ground. I shall revisit it to see the house where he first saw the light." He did, and affords some particulars of the condition of Shakespeare's house in 1815. "Its appearance is miserable in the extreme—the front a butcher's shop." Among the miscellaneous and mostly apocryphal relics at that time displayed within is mentioned "a portrait taken in his lifetime which had been torn in pieces and recently put together." Can this be identified with any alleged portrait now existing?

Fox's experiences among the scenes of his youth were of a character to encourage the hostility to the Corn Laws which, nearly thirty years afterwards, was to find full expression on the platforms of the

League. He says, writing from Norwich on 23rd May 1816 :—

Suffolk and Norfolk are in a dreadful state. The poor, irritated by the rise of corn and scarcity of work, have in many places burnt down barns, houses, etc. In the neighbourhood of Bury, on Saturday, six houses were blazing at once. On the evening of my arrival here (17th) fireballs were thrown about, lamps, windows, etc., broken. On the Friday the mob was much more formidable. The new mills, a large building across the river, were taken by storm ; quantities of corn were carried off, or thrown into the river, and much damage was done to many houses. On Saturday evening the appearance of the city strongly reminded me of the descriptions of Paris at the commencement of the Revolution. The market cleared of its usual crowd of country people at an early hour ; most of the shops shut up ; the Town Hall, which the mob had attempted to fire, garrisoned by troops, their arms glittering through its Gothic windows ; near twenty parish bells tolling dismally to summon the associated parishioners to assemble and take their posts for the night ; every here and there the visible traces of the last night's outrages ; a body of dragoons drawn up in the market-place with every preparation for action ; large patrols of inhabitants encountering you at every step ; parties of cavalry riding furiously about, and scouring the streets in all directions ; groups of desperate looking people scattered about—here attempting resistance to the troops and there flying before them, and mingling yells and cries for bread with the trampling of horses and the tolling bells.

This was indeed an object lesson capable of turning a divine with more professional feeling than Fox ever possessed into a politician, and the conduct of the mob, complaining with their tongues of the scarcity of the food which they were destroying with their hands, may have helped to inspire him with that zeal for popular education which conferred his especial note among the reformers of his time. Six months after his witnessing the riots so graphically described, he was summoned to a sphere of

wider influence than he had yet enjoyed by his invitation to fill the pulpit of Parliament Court Chapel, Artillery Lane, Bishopsgate Street, vacant by the death of William Vidler.

Parliament Court Chapel had already afforded a pulpit to two remarkable ministers, Elhanan Winchester and William Vidler. Winchester is regarded as the founder of Universalism, not, of course, the first man to revive the teaching of Origen in modern times, but the first who made it the leading tenet from which his followers derived their appellation, though they were not so distinguished by himself. He had been at one time the leading Baptist minister in Philadelphia, but the obloquy then attaching to his peculiar heresy drove him to England, where, after long roaming among divers Baptist chapels, he eventually collected a band of followers sufficiently numerous and earnest to build Parliament Court Chapel for him in 1793. He does not seem to have been heretical on any other topic than final restoration, but Universalism is usually found to conduct to Unitarianism and *vice versa*; and Winchester's teaching paved the way for the flagrant heterodoxy of his convert and successor, William Vidler, whose avowal of Unitarian sentiments in 1802 rent the congregation asunder. Vidler nevertheless remained in possession of the chapel, which was kept going by Unitarian support until, in 1808, its members dropped their original appellation of Philadelphians, and adopted Anti-Trinitarianism as their principal bond of union. It is remarkable that Universalism has never formed the cardinal tenet of any church in England, and has rarely appeared even as the designation of an almost invisible sect, while in America the Universalist Church has numerous adherents among the less cultured classes, for whom the creed of Channing is too refined and too merely philanthropic. Though his corpulent frame engrossed two chairs, Vidler's intellect was alert and active, and he

left his congregation in a flourishing condition at his death in August 1816. Fox was invited to succeed him on 24th November following, and was installed on 2nd April 1817. In his acceptance he had guarded against whatever might bear the semblance of ecclesiastical ordination, and in his public address, "declined to make any confession of faith except that he was a Christian, and desired to be extensively useful as a Christian minister. Unfettered and unlimited freedom he claimed for himself and would cheerfully concede to all his brethren."

The change was great indeed from the small cathedral city, where the narrow intellectual horizon was still further restricted by social and religious prejudice, to the ample world of London, with openings for political and philanthropic work on every side, and crowds of sympathetic well-wishers. The period was interesting and critical. Relief from the incubus of the Napoleonic wars had revived those aspirations for liberty which, a quarter of a century before, had so nearly translated themselves into action, but which had long been stifled by public peril and alarm at revolutionary excesses on the Continent. Reform was becoming a watchword, and reform was for the time summed up in the redistribution of voting power and the extension of the franchise. Dissenters, smarting under the insult of the Test Act, the exaction of church rates, exclusion from the universities and what they deemed the arrogance of the dominant Church, were inevitably reformers almost to a man; and Fox's own denomination was as deeply permeated with the liberal spirit as any of the rest, although the majority of its ministers, conservative in temperament and heirs to the dignified traditions of Presbyterianism, might fairly be described as Whigs, and frequently maintained confidential relations with the Whig statesmen. Fox, on the other hand, was at that time a Radical who could well have dispensed with the House of Lords and probably

with the throne itself : but the general agreement among reformers to concentrate their efforts upon parliamentary reform prevented such differences from becoming so prominent as was the case in after years. All educational and philanthropic movements found a warm supporter in him. The most conspicuous at the time was the Lancasterian School backed by Liberals against the Church schools of Dr Ball. Fox had scarcely been installed a month when he found himself assisting at the great field day of the Lancasterian School in the City Road, where the prizes were given by the Duke of Sussex, the only Liberal member of the royal family, and receiving the warmest compliments from his Royal Highness on " my forcible and brilliant oratory." " The Duke," he says, " is tall and stout, with a fine open countenance and most hearty and popular manners." The great apostle of education himself had about this found his way to Chichester, and is described by Miss Florance as very fat, with a benevolent and intelligent countenance, and a great fund of anecdote. Yet, with all his powers of pleasing in private, Lancaster was inefficient as a lecturer. " He has," says Miss Florance, " neither eloquence nor sound argument to recommend him ; if it were not for the benevolence and liberality of his intentions such numbers would never run to hear him."

Lancaster, though the elder Wakefield thought he " had done at most as much for enlightenment as Martin Luther," is a less living figure to the present generation than another educationalist who received the dire anathema of Charles Lamb, but whom Fox sought out as a celebrity :—

One evening last week G. and I took tea with Mrs Barbould. She is a handsome old lady, of small stature and most intelligent countenance. At first I felt, as usual upon being introduced to any celebrated body, a little uncomfortable ; this was

succeeded by disappointment at her not being more extraordinary, but as the conversation became more regular and interesting all disappointment vanished, and she appeared fully equal to all my expectations. She touched on various literary topics with ease and elegance. Moore, she told us was in the neighbourhood, at Hornsey, finishing his large poem. On my asking if she did not admire the melody of his versification, she replied, very ladyly, that she did in *all that she had read* of his, which was only a few stray songs that had fallen in her way. Of Lord Byron, the third canto especially, she spoke with fervent admiration; and in quoting a part of the breaking up at Brussels, her face kindled with all the glow of poetic enthusiasm. Her recitation is rather musical than natural, and she actually beats time to the verse with her foot.

The Nonconformist churches derive great advantage from the frequent interchange of pulpits, and invitations extended to ministers at a distance to preach on anniversaries and other special occasions. Such sermons are frequently printed, and spread the fame of the minister beyond the narrow limits of his own congregation. Fox's invitation to London was probably much promoted by three published sermons originally preached at Brighton, Bristol, and Salisbury. Their especial attractions were rhetorical power and a manliness of utterance which exempted rhetoric from the charge of affectation. It was clearly not an assumption for the sake of effect, but the form of expression most consonant with the character of the speaker, to whom rhetoric not unfrequently rising to genuine eloquence came by nature. Though able, as he had shown at the Lancasterian prize day, to speak with effect on the spur of the moment, Fox at this time so little trusted his faculty of improvisation that, when he had gone to preach at Taunton, and having accidentally left his sermon at Bristol, a good-natured brother minister was obliged to go all the way back for it, else had it never been heard at Taunton. In later years Fox's oratory

owed much to his surpassing beauty of elocution : whether this was the case in his youth does not appear, but Miss Florance remarks that he had to free himself from many provincialisms when he came to Chichester. His diminutive stature was against him. "There is," wrote Hazlitt in 1824, "a Mr Fox, a Dissenting Minister, as fluent a speaker, with a sweeter voice and a more animated and beneficent countenance than Mr Irving, who is the darling of his congregation ; but he is no more, because he is diminutive in person. His head is not seen above the crowd the length of a street off. He is the Duke of Sussex in miniature, but the Duke of Sussex does not go to hear him preach, as he attends Mr Irving, who rises up against him like a Martello tower." Belsham inviting Fox in 1818, to preach at Essex Street Chapel, advises him to come early and assure himself that the pulpit has undergone the alteration necessary to metamorphose a short minister into a tall one. The sermons he published at this time are mostly defences of Unitarianism. One, that delivered at Bristol in 1815, takes a wider scope, and urges free inquiry as a universal duty, from which no member of any church has a right to exempt himself. The following passage will give a good idea of Fox's characteristic blending of rhetoric with reason. Answering the objection that free inquiry will destroy unity of opinion in religion, he says :—

Did God ever intend that strict unity of sentiment should prevail among rational creatures ? Variety seems a principle of his government. Thousands of stars spangle the heavens, shine they with the same brightness ? Millions of flowers odour the earth, glow they with the same colours ? A profusion of shrubs, plants, and trees diversifies our hills and plains ; present they the same appearances of stem or of leaf, of blossom or of fruit ? Crowds of living beings people earth, air, and sea ; their forms are not more different than their habits and enjoyments. In all the multitudes of human creatures we search

in vain for an identity of shape, feature, voice, talents or circumstances. Why should we expect in religion a uniformity which can be found nowhere else in the whole universe of God.

The latter end of the sermon somewhat forgets the beginning, for Fox represents free inquiry as capable of producing that consentaneity which he has declared to be impossible. But the elegance and vigour of the language mark the speaker as one capable of filling not only a pulpit but a church.

In 1818 Fox delivered a series of lectures on the corruptions of Christianity, chiefly remarkable for a strong assertion of the unlawfulness of war in any and every case, which he lived to recant. In 1819 he did himself much honour, but at the same time impaired the confidence of many members of his denomination, by his sermon on the duties of Christians towards Deists, called forth by the prosecution of Richard Carlile for selling Paine's *Age of Reason*. He had denounced the proceedings by anticipation. "If Deists will listen to you," he said, "persuade them; if they will reason, argue with them; if they write and publish, reply to them; if they misrepresent, expose them; but, in the name of Christ, do not persecute them, do not abet or sanction their persecution." During the trial he was continually in court as an observer of the proceedings, and on 24th October he rose in the pulpit not merely to protest against the prosecution as contrary to the spirit of Christianity, but to rebuke Christians for not "as a body, in their meetings, preaching, conversation and behaviour, on public occasions or in private life, treating Deists in that way which charity should prompt, or even that which is demanded by justice." The indictment concerned Fox's own denomination as much as any other, and excited some published protests, Unitarians being in truth exceedingly nervous

upon the subject, and in their hearts thinking it better that Deists should suffer some unfairness than that they should themselves be taxed with disguised infidelity. Fox found it advisable to preface his discourse, when printed, by a kind of confession of faith, which within a generation had become too narrow not only for him but for the leaders of Unitarian thought everywhere, and which probably would not now be accepted by a single Unitarian congregation in Great Britain. There is little in the sermon which would not command universal assent at the present day, in its own day it was not only eloquent but courageous ; and the more so as the doubts and suspicions which it aroused among conservative Unitarians were from their point of view by no means unreasonable. The partition between Christianity and natural religion had evidently become thin for one who could write as Fox wrote in allusion to his deceased friend Saint. " If the sincere love of truth and goodness ; if just claims to the regard and gratitude of all around ; if friendship the most disinterested and unvarying ; if pious feeling, pure and elevated, towards the Author of nature, and philanthropy the most diffusive—can form a title to high esteem, then have I known, and well known, one instance at least in which it was due to an unbeliever."

Fox was now upon the eve of a step momentous to him, his marriage. Without it he might probably never have been more than leading minister of his denomination, but the ascent to higher spheres was to be a very Hill of Difficulty. As men are said to be " cradled into poetry by wrong," so the conspicuous position he won in after life was to be attained by a long course of domestic infelicity, carried at length to a point necessitating the rupture of the professional ties which would have kept him out of politics and letters. The cause of his misfortune must be sought in his own weakness. His character was more pliable than might have been inferred from the strength of his convictions

and the intrepidity of his public conduct. He complains himself of the difficulty he experienced in saying No ! and this want of resolution was never more clearly or more unfortunately exemplified than in the manner in which he suffered his relations with Eliza Florance to drift into inextricable entanglement. The "semi-engagement" had, as we have seen, been broken off in 1815 at the lady's own wish, out of deference to the objections of her father. Thus it should have remained, but about the period of his removal to London, and for some time afterwards, Fox is found writing to Miss Florance in a strain which would fully warrant her in deeming that he looked forward to a return to the former state of things, nor can she be blamed for taking him at his word. After a while, however, a change is apparent ; letters, though never cold, are never impassioned ; and, unless many have been suppressed, there is a notable diminution in their frequency. The attachment, now a mere matter of habit on Fox's part, and not especially ardent on that of his *innamorata*, would probably have died away but for the derangement of her father's affairs which in 1819 brought Miss Florance to London with the creditable motive of supporting herself by giving instruction, to which end she seems to have entered a large school at Chelsea as pupil-teacher. If the faint impressions of a later generation may be trusted, the engagement, in which this step resulted by the end of the year, was not brought about without considerable pressure from the lady and her relatives, and, if so, it is no wonder if the same consequences followed as in the parallel cases of Coleridge and Irving. But all is uncertainty, except that in September 1819 the parties did not consider themselves engaged, and that in January 1820 they did. Writing to his mother many years afterwards, Fox says :—

Very soon after my marriage I found I had made a blunder ; and though a moderate share of comfort, a disposition to help

me in my exertions, at least some sympathy with these, and economy in the management of their fruits, would have pretty well contented me, I did not find even these.

The modesty of these anticipations seems in no way inconsistent with the tenor of the letter he actually wrote to his mother announcing the intended marriage, of which he knew that she would disapprove :—

Perhaps I shall surprise you, but I hope not unpleasantly, for as Sarah and you made up your minds to be very angry last summer if certain reports turned out to be true, I wish to save you the trouble of making up your minds again to be angry if there should be the same reports next summer, and they should really happen to be true. I am very tired of being in lodgings. One gets cheated, or neglected, or a hundred uncomfortable things. And so I mean this spring to take a house, and have been looking out, though not successfully as yet, for one which will suit me exactly. I have engaged a house-keeper from Chichester, and shall bring her to Norwich before the summer is over that you may see how you like her, and also that she may learn how to make a Norfolk pudding. Seriously, my dear mother, you have known Miss Florance some time by name. She has a very kind heart, and is no fool, and I think you will all be pleased with her. When grandmother hears it she will be thinking about money, but I can't say much as to that. Her father has been too open in matters of religion and politics to grow very rich in the little church and—king city of Chichester. However, she is, at any rate, as rich as I am, and we shall start in a house decently furnished, without debt. I want no more.

The marriage took place on 20th April 1820. The uncongeniality seems not to have immediately manifested itself ; for in 17th December 1820 and 1821 Fox produces his customary annual tribute of complimentary birthday verse. On the second occasion, however, the theme is less the mother than the child who had been added to the family in the preceding August, and destiny converted the expression of parental hope and fondness to bitter

irony. Nothing could be more natural than to promise the mother that "her natal song" should one day be sung by the infant boy : nothing could be less foreseen than that the child would be a deaf mute !

In February 1822 Fox was attacked by an illness so severe as to keep him from the pulpit for an entire year. Mrs Bridell Fox, though refraining from any direct censure of any person, seems to hint that it was brought on by the misery of disillusion combined with the vexation of financial embarrassments occasioned by domestic extravagance. At one time his condition seemed so hopeless that a successor in his pulpit was virtually appointed. The symptoms as described by himself seem indicative of a complete breakdown. In a thanksgiving sermon preached on his return to ministerial duty, Fox eloquently describes the condition of the sick :—

Watching the gradual fading of day into night, and again the gradual brightening of night into day, but without exertion in the one, or repose in the other ; seeing inanimate nature pursuing its destined course, suns rising and setting, moons waxing and waning, flowers opening and withering ; all moving, rolling on, and answering the great end of being without knowing it, while with us consciousness is only that of passive existence ; hearing from afar the bustle and stir of this mighty world, where there is so much doing and to be done, and where even the weakest and humblest has his sphere of action and ministers something to the sphere of human happiness and improvement ; but hearing it only as if we were in the grave, and the busy crowd rushed by on over us ; the painful and humbling sensation of being not only a blank but a burden in society ; the feeling of helplessness and dependence on others, even in the merest trifles, which only the tenderest care in them can make tolerable, and which no kindness can entirely repress ; the weakness which ever forbids efforts to which imagination incessantly urges, till the mind sinks in its vain struggle with the infirmities of the body, shattered and exhausted, like the bird beating against the bars of its cage.

He sought refuge at Sandown Bay, then an almost solitary spot. Years afterwards he thus eloquently recorded its soothing influence in *The Monthly Repository* :—

The very extent of the bay, the sweep of that graceful arch, whose ocean chord is miles in length ; the protecting hill behind, completing the circle with the shoreless ocean in front ; the few dwellings, and of the part nearest the coast one may almost say the fewer trees, all gave me the sensation which I needed of vast space, where I might range as far as physical strength would allow without interruption or intrusion. For disease had generated a deep aversion to society, a shrinking from the presence of humanity. The feeling was not at all the less distressful for being unnatural and unaccountable. The apprehension of a call would produce a nervous tremor, and on the commonest exchange of courtesies I had to pay a tax of pain which kindness, knowing it, would have regarded as a prohibitory duty. Much, therefore, was it to me to see and feel that there were neither visitors at my door, nor acquaintances in my path. Even words my imagination would have peopled ; streets I could not have endured ; and in a narrow bounded scene like that of Shanklin I should never have emerged from the ravine or have passed the projection, without expecting to come suddenly upon somebody who would have talked to me. But at Sandown there were only these quiet and beautiful and everlasting objects which grew near to my heart because they never moved towards me, and became powerful over me by their very quiescence.

“ Yet it is not good for man to be alone,” and until Fox “ could begin to bear that the shadow of humanity should cross my lengthened and lengthening walks,” he was liable to be haunted by the terrors of the sea in broad daylight :—

I walked one day towards the other extremity of the bay often looking back at those white Culvers blazing in the sun, until I got so far as to see another white cliff, not so high, but still of enormous size, projecting beyond them, and which, being

in form and colour not unlike the swelling mainsail of a man-of-war, had something the appearance of a gigantic vessel doubling the point in order to come into the bay. Struck with this appearance, I laid me down on the sands to enjoy it, when, after gazing intently for some minutes, I actually beheld it move. It sailed off, right out into the sea, and then stood for the centre of the bay. Only imagine my astonishment. On it came, that huge ship of solid chalk, and the very waves fled affrighted from its prow, and came crowding and trembling to the shore for protection. As it approached, their alarm seemed greater, and for escape they even ran into the country, and up the adjacent hills, all in a foam. On it came, and I saw that it had a crew (such a crew !) of the same material as itself—monstrous animated blocks of chalk—their eyes, the black glassy surfaces which stick about in the cliffs, all irregularly disposed, and glaring as with the light of spirit-lamps behind them ; their limbs, half-shaped, as if not cut but broken roughly out of the rock, moving as if by pulleys, and with a harsh grating noise ; their tramp on the deck resounded and re-echoed like thunder along the shore, towards which they seemed addressing themselves in a wild chant.

We may be reminded of Turner's "Sea Monster at Dawn," where the monster's eyes are idealised representations of the port-holes of a ship. Reminiscences of the Ancient Mariner may have had a part in evoking this vision : Hauff's *Spectre Ship*, if written, was not then translated. Fox's fame as a man of letters would have stood higher if he had been able to devote himself more to prose poetry ; but his Pegasus was doomed to perpetual harness.

It is probably to the experiences of this illness that allusion is made in the letter written many years afterwards to Peter Taylor, a portion of which has already been quoted :—

I have been very near death and two feelings of the time have left lasting [traces] : an almost longing for the intense stillness and repose that a few hours seemed likely to make pervade the chamber of suffering, and, with it, a serene and calm conviction

that the Principle of Life in us must be continuous. The pain of the great change precedes it. So it is with almost every large accession of good. Exertion and Endurance combined are the price of greater good here; thus may the co-operation of Life and Death be the means of higher Life.

In the autumn of 1823 an invitation to preach at Edinburgh gave Fox the opportunity of making a Scotch tour organised by his intimate friend, Dr Southwood Smith, who, after having crowned a brief career in the Unitarian ministry by his classical treatise, "On the Divine Government," had established himself in medical practice in London, and was paving the way for the sanitary reform which he was afterwards to accomplish in conjunction with Lord Shaftesbury and Edwin Chadwick, a reform which was to save innumerable lives by attacking disease at its root instead of in its branches. The remainder of the party consisted of the veteran reformer Benjamin Flower and his daughters Eliza and Sarah, of whom we shall hear much, and Matilda Florance, Mrs Fox's sister. The expedition took the tourists not only to Edinburgh but over a considerable part of the Highlands. Its culminating point in every sense was the ascent of Ben Lomond, scaled by Sarah Flower in less time than previously recorded of any lady. Fox wrote a full account of it for his mother, agreeable reading, but detailing experiences too habitual to deserve resuscitation now. The opening up of the Scotch rivers and lakes by steamboats, and consequent cheapness of travel and increase of visitors, may, however, be noted as signs of the times; and there is a melancholy pleasure in citing Fox's emphatic testimony to the efficiency of Robert Owen's schools at New Lanark, so soon to be blighted for lack of saving common-sense:—

The children of this factory have every provision for amusement and instruction that could be coveted by the wealthiest, and when they get to the working age (some under ten years), the fewer hours than others, the cleanliness, the reading-rooms,

lectures, concerts, dances, the comfortable dwellings, and all this in one of the most beautiful spots in Scotland, make one astonished that such a paradise could be made out of a cotton manufactory even by the talent, benevolence and perseverance of Mr Owen. I never saw so many happy faces in my life. The examinations of the children proved that about the school at least there was no quacking. I believe the pupils of few boarding schools in England could have stood such an examination so well."

While Fox was recruiting his health and spirits in Scotland, the walls of his new chapel were rising in London. Well placed, and occupying a site which has now become of great value, South Place Chapel survives to testify to the standard of Nonconformist architectural taste and requirements in that day, nor does it compare unfavourably with the more pretentious structures of more popular religious bodies. The freehold had cost £600, the cost of erection was £3546. It was opened on 1st February 1824 with two sermons from Fox and devotional services conducted by the Rev. Russell Scott, of Portsmouth, the friend of his Fareham days: the proceedings were reported in *The Monthly Repository* by Southwood Smith.

During this period Fox's influence outside his denomination had been slowly growing, favoured by an appointment to an office within, that of foreign secretary to the Unitarian Association. This enlarged the sphere of his acquaintance, and brought him into connection with a remarkable and versatile personage, Sir John, then Dr Bowring—poet, philologist, economist, financier, patriot, philanthropist, politician, and factotum to Jeremy Bentham. If not supereminent in any of these lines, Bowring was respectable in all, and the union of so many converging beams created a focus capable of radiating no inconsiderable amount of light and warmth upon his friends. His chief services to Fox were rendered in connection with *The Westminster Review*, but before the

Review was he had approached him at Bentham's desire with the request that he would be so very kind as to edit *Not Paul but Jesus*. This celebrated book, eventually published under the pseudonym of Gamaliel Smith, but in fact put together by Francis Place from Bentham's notes, existed in 1821 in the condition of an unpublished manuscript—a potential firebrand, which Bentham and Bowring deemed meet to be attached to Fox. Fox declines to be entrapped; he would be most happy to preface the book could he say that he thoroughly agreed with it or thoroughly disagreed; “but my mind is in neither of these states.” Later letters from Bowring refer to the condition of Unitarianism on the Continent, and in particular to the prospect of opening up more intimate relations with the Consistory of Geneva, which had undergone a similar doctrinal evolution to that of the English Presbyterians, halting, however, at Arianism. One letter contains the highly interesting statement, if well founded, “A young Pole named Kuszeliwski has given me most interesting details connected with the descendants of the old Socinians. He tells me there are many of them in the neighbourhood of Seszno.” In another letter he says, “I have been under Robert Owen's talk for half the morning, and yesterday morning, and the day before, and am bedevilled in the mists of his millennium.” Another note introduces Fox to the elder Mill. “Mr Mill wishes to see you because you are yourself, and I wish you to see him on the subject of infant schools.” The following letter seems appalling, but only relates to one of those *bourrasques* not infrequent in Bowring's chequered career, which did not prevent his dying a prosperous gentleman:—

2 QUEEN SQUARE PLACE,
September 22, 1829.

You of course know that the storm has burst—my house abandoned—my wife and children dispersed, and I on the way

to other climes. It is useless to go over the melancholy ground again. I am here [Mr Bentham's] for a few days, and then—away.

What I wanted to do on my own account and risk is no longer to be thought of. If I can get subscribers enough, to publish my Hungarian books. If not, the MS. may be burnt. Evermore, with kindest affection, best wishes, and undying remembrance,

JOHN BOWRING.

The Poetry of the Magyars nevertheless appeared in 1830, and so early as January of that year the exile in expectancy is found in Wellington Street, Strand, corresponding with Fox about new contributions to *The Westminster Review*. Though circumstances separated the two men in after life, their regard remained undiminished. In 1852 Bowring, then Governor of Hong Kong, was serviceable to Fox's second son, a young sailor in Eastern waters, and wrote to Fox with all the old philological enthusiasm about the progress which he fondly deemed himself to be making in Chinese. After Fox's death he wrote an elaborate article upon him in *The Theological Review*, which, if not entirely adequate, is creditable to his generosity, seeing that Fox had been one of the majority that condemned his proceedings at Canton by the memorable division of February 1857, which interrupted the parliamentary careers of Cobden, Bright, Milner Gibson, Layard, and Fox himself.

The immediate instrument of Fox's connection with *The Westminster Review*, nevertheless, was not so much Bowring as Henry Southern, afterwards known in the diplomatic world as Lord Clarendon's secretary in Spain and British minister to Brazil, at that time a young man, apparently of ebullient animal spirits, ambitious of gaining a position in literature, less in the character of author than of editor. He was at one time part owner of *The London Magazine*, and had deserved well of letters by founding that valuable periodical, *The Retrospective Review*, which,

among other noteworthy services, gave Fox his first footing in the regions of polite literature. To it he had contributed essays on the literature of the occult sciences, on the philosophical romances of *Sethos*, Fletcher of Saltoun, Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, Witchcraft and the Dramas of Nathaniel Lee. The last named is a fine piece of criticism, evincing a discriminating sympathy with a dramatist whose obtrusive faults might easily have eclipsed his less conspicuous beauties. A passage in Fox's notice of *Sethos*, a romance in the style of *Telemachus*, by the Abbé Terasson, composed in support of the thesis that the religion and institutions of Greece were derived from Egypt, may well have inspired Moore with the idea of his *Epicurean*.

Stuart Mill's autobiography has already informed us that *The Westminster Review* was founded at the cost and charge of Jeremy Bentham, and that the editorship was first offered to his foremost disciple, James Mill, who declined it as inconsistent with his official position under the East India Company. It was then offered to Bowring whom Mill thought "unfit to teach moral philosophy," or even politics; and Mill perhaps deemed it still further deflected from the right path when Bowring allied himself with Southern, to prevent the latter from starting a review of his own. "The two editors," says Stuart Mill, "agreed to unite their corps, and divide the editorship, Bowring taking the political, Southern the literary department." (The classification of morals and science remains obscure.) Fox, having previously taken Southern's shilling, was probably enrolled in *his* corps, and to this we are indebted for the following racy letter:—

SERGEANT'S INN, FLEET STREET,
(Dec. 17, 1823.)

DEAR FOX,—We have had a kick-up with our publisher, Longmans have discovered us to be a pack of radicals, and have

treated us accordingly. We are, however, not likely to fare the worse, though in all probability we shall appear under the banners of another firm. At present this is a secret (known to not more than a quarter of the world). Do not speak of it for your life until you see it published. I fear now that we shall not be out by the 1st January. We are under apprehensions that the first number will be dull. I am disappointed in the article on Don Juan; the man who wrote it had a design to ruin the review, and give me the benefit of a month's exercise in the treadmill. I suppose you will not undertake the task, to be done in ten days. If you do not, somebody must and that somebody will turn out to be me, who am overwhelmed with occupation. Well, it being that if you will not write I must, will you assist me with a few hints, a few heads for a man, whose pen must run at nine knots, has not much leisure or inclination to knock up questions for the pleasure of knocking them down.

You are prohibited by your cloth (the only bullet proof manufacture of wool) or I would call you names—where has your heart been that you have thus long neglected the stranger's grave? ¹ This comes of being a Unitarian. And the prospectus of the newspaper—you had need wear black—a colour which the philosophers say arises from the absorption and destruction of all the rays of light, the emblems of truth. Pray let me hear immediately concerning the topics which I have thus luminously touched upon, with my paper upon my popedom (that's my great scarlet armchair, the colour of the Italian Babylon you know) my toast alternate with my tea in my left hand, my right wielding that instrument with which I pick authors' eyes out,

Believe me very truly yours,

HENRY SOUTHERN.

Notwithstanding the precedent of Goethe, who impressed theological students to perform as imps in *Don Giovanni*, Southern can hardly have cherished sanguine expectations of inducing a minister of religion to review *Don Juan*, which, in fact, was not reviewed at all, nor is it known who was the indiscreet contributor who so nearly

¹ This perhaps refers to some contribution promised to *The Retrospective Review*.

brought the *Review* into contact with the Attorney General. The distinction which fell to Fox of writing the first article in the first number of the first series of the *Review*, as he afterwards did in the second series, was not a special compliment to him, but was necessitated by the subject of his essay, a review of men and things in 1823, nominally a review of a poem on the same subject by Shergold Boone, a clever young Oxonian who had disappointed the expectations entertained of him, and of whom an account will be found in Mozley's Oriel reminiscences. The article was worthy of its place, being full of vigour, and interesting even now as a token of the aspect which the English world then presented to an intelligent man who felt himself progressing with a progressing society. Fox clearly recognises, what Disraeli about the same time utterly failed to perceive, that the people at large have become all-important, and that "their opinions are wanted, not as in old days their thews and sinews. They must be informed and considered. The very highest talent has been applied to this purpose. At public meetings it is evident that most of our great speakers now do their best. They no longer come in that careless and unprepared way which seemed to say, and did mean, any nonsense may be talked to a multitude. Our newspapers bear abundant marks of a similar improvement. They are the not infrequent vehicles of communication between the very noblest minds and the sense and heart of the many." To appreciate the progressiveness manifested in this attitude of mind it should be remembered that two years afterwards Scott was dissuading his son-in-law from connection with a newspaper, as something inconsistent with the character of a gentleman. Cobbett, while his want of principle is lamented, is praised as a great instrument in the awakening of popular intelligence. "He has been a greater enlightener than he intended, and has so well instructed thousands that he cannot now himself lead them." Of Owen it is said, "Our social arrangements

may stop far short of the forms contemplated by Mr Owen, but there seems good reason to expect that they will be modified by the influence of his favourite co-operative principle."

The drawback to the generally favourable condition of things—though Fox does not sufficiently recognise it as such—is the general spirit of cheap utilitarianism. Mathematics and metaphysics are neglected. "The multitude does not understand such matters, and the literary world only cares about what the multitude does understand." Scott is somewhat unexpectedly named as the author in whom the tendencies of the age are more fully impersonated. From the particular point of view presented this is defensible, but Fox has evidently no prevision of the influence which Scott was to exert in rehabilitating the ideals of the past or of the great reaction in the Church of England towards mediævalism already at the door.

Notwithstanding the exhortations of Bowring, and at a later period of Stuart Mill, Fox wrote little more for the *Westminster* until, with the commencement of the new series in 1852, he was again enlisted to write the first article. His time was no doubt much occupied with the affairs of his congregation, and of the religious organisation of which it formed a part. The discourses which he afterwards learned to deliver extemporaneously, though never without premeditation, were at this period written out carefully in shorthand, though probably but little use was made of the MS. in the pulpit. When Bishop Blomfield, then a London rector, attacked Unitarianism, Fox responded (1823) with *The Apostle John a Unitarian*, by which title, as he explained, he did not intend to intimate that the Evangelist taught the simple humanity of Christ, but that he did not teach his deity. The tract is a good specimen of what would now be regarded as an antiquated method of controversy. Fox also wrote much in *The Monthly Repository* ere yet the time had arrived when, as will be

seen, he took it entirely into his own hands. He worked besides as foreign secretary for the Unitarian Association, a body towards whose establishment he had himself taken the initial steps in 1817. It was formally constituted in 1825 by the amalgamation of three separate societies, a step largely due to Fox's suggestion, and when the fiftieth anniversary came to be held in 1875, James Martineau, the hero of the occasion, hailed Fox as its original founder.

The connection of the following letter with the Unitarian position may warrant its insertion here, though chronologically a year or two beyond the limit of this chapter. The question discussed, a highly practical one in the eighteenth century, had somewhat fallen into abeyance when Joanna Baillie wrote; but the recent dissemination of broad views in the Church of England has reinvested it with importance, and it cannot be uninteresting to learn the opinion of one so universally revered. It should be added that liturgical conformity was easier for her than for Fox, for she was an Arian.

HAMPSTEAD,
Sept. 20th, 1831.

SIR,—I am very much obliged to you for your favourable notice of my late publication of *Scriptural Passages* etc., and for the very flattering mention you have made of me as a writer. I wished to have thanked you sooner, but I was not at first aware how to direct a letter to an anonymous author, and afterwards other things came across to put it out of my head: have the goodness now to accept my best acknowledgments.

My chief reason, however, for writing to you is to endeavour to remove the bad opinion you entertain of my sentiments respecting the unity of worship when not accompanied by unity of faith. You are very candid in admitting that I am myself free from hypocrisy; I must therefore presume that you will be equally candid and indulgent to those who, like me, repeat no part of the church liturgy which is contrary to their belief and at the same time openly declare why they do not repeat it. Your censure then must chiefly rest on the bad effects which you

apprehend such conformity would have on the feelings and devotions of the dissenting worshippers, or the inexpediency of continuing to lend an apparent strength to the Established Church which she does not really possess. You say "If there be any point in which agreement is necessary as to the object of that worship which we assemble to offer," and further on "They ought surely to have determined whether they were about to worship one Person or Three, an incorporeal being or an incarnate one." It does not appear to me that a devout heart offering up its prayers to one Supreme God alone, should be disturbed because others, under the same sacred roof offer prayers also to his blessed son, acknowledging him (from the authority as they think of Christian Scripture) as God equal with his Father. If they find that it does not disturb their devotions, they are certainly right in absenting themselves. As to the point of expediency, you laugh at the idea of the Church reforming herself, and to expect this may indeed be deemed more sanguine than reasonable. But the authority of the Legislature can do everything, and the prevalence of public opinion does at length actuate the Legislature. By discouraging this union of worship, you will increase in a very small degree the number of unitarian sectaries, while you greatly increase the number of those who refrain from repeating in Church such parts of the Service as they disapprove, but do not openly avow that they do so. It appears to me much more for the interest of your cause to enlarge the extent of avowed opinion in your favour, than to add a very limited accession to the Congregation of your various unitarian chapels; and I feel confident that if the union I recommend were to become general (as I think it would) not many years would elapse before the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds and such parts of the service as are conformed to them, would be removed from the book of Common Prayer.

The Unitarians in separating from the Church, have been of great use in promoting discussion and the diligent examination of Scripture and they have also been of great use, in many cases, by setting a noble example of disinterestedness, through those clergymen who have given up Church preferment for conscience sake, and I honour them for it with all my heart. For let it be understood that the unity of worship proposed by me, regards the Laity only, whose worldly interests are little affected by their religious opinions, and who have no articles of faith to

which they are obliged to subscribe. Such honest and advised dissent without separation in the Laity, might be the means under the blessing of God of emancipating both themselves and a great part of the Clergy in England. Such at least is my persuasion and my hope : and though it is not my intention to enter into controversy with those who differ from me in the particular views they may take of this subject, I could not forbear communicating my sentiments to one who seems so friendly and partial to me, for his own information as a private individual.

Believe me, Sir, Your obliged and obedient servant,

J. BAILLIE.

One of the most interesting letters addressed to Fox at this period which have been preserved is from William Hone, whose defeat of Lord Ellenborough when indicted on a trumped-up charge of blasphemous parody is a memorable epoch in the history of the struggle for freedom of the press. Notwithstanding the immense success of his *Political House that Jack Built*, which, aided by Cruikshank's pencil, had gone through fifty-four editions, Hone was in embarrassed circumstances. It is impossible not to be touched by the dignity and simplicity of his appeals not for pecuniary assistance, but for Fox's influence on behalf of his son-in-law.

22 BELVIDERE PLACE, SOUTHWARK,
3rd June, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,—Misfortune and ill report usually go together, and you cannot therefore, I imagine, be ignorant, that I am, at least, in deep trouble. How it has been occasioned many will presume to know better than myself—of such knowledge, or of any of the manifold conjectures concerning me, I am uninformed, and desire to remain so, but of this I do with truth, assure you, that if I have life and faculties, I shall be able to show I have derived nothing but sorrow to myself, and have done nothing for which anyone may blush when he recollects that he at any time befriended me. In my present situation I do not expect the world to alter its usual course, but I do hope

there may be a few, who, if they cannot afford me their open countenance, will in some degree continue their private favour, and I am mistaken if I may not regard you as one of that "few"—for though we have seldom met, yet, when we have, it has been with intimacy, and I have met you as often as any, of that small number, whom I could esteem as friends. I say this because it is natural for you to suppose that I might have seen others more frequently—but, in truth, for the last two years, I have been secluded in the midst of the world, and during the last summer, and even into the present year, have had so much of mental infirmity as to be unable to see anyone without communicating pain, and inflicting greater on myself.

But, to come to my present purpose, it is fitting I should at once tell you, that since I have come under the extreme power of the law, by the enforcement of just claims upon me which I am unable to discharge, my second daughter Fanny has been married to Mr Thomas Hensley of King Street Tower Hill. He is son to a daughter of old Mrs Seaton of Chatham, through an old friendship with whom I became acquainted with his late father. This young man is neither bookish, nor political, nor fanatical—but he is one of the most straightforward fellows in the world, and if he cannot make his way in it by plain dealing, he will not get through it at all. By business he is an optician and mathematical instrument maker, and there *was* a time when I had hoped to have assisted him but now I am powerless. His father died in rather embarrassed circumstances, and Thomas aided by another of his brothers has discharged every penny of this parent's debts, and so restricted his own means, that they are insufficient. He is nothing but an honest man, with an honest girl for his wife, and being my son-in-law, I feel, on my daughter's account, a painful anxiety for his welfare, and the more so, as he resisted the prudent remonstrances of prudent friends, who, as soon as my situation was known, gave him advice, which, if he had followed, would have broken my poor girl's heart. Tom's answer was a call upon me to walk out of the purlieus of a prison, and give him Fanny's hand at Aldgate Church.

This Thomas Hensley is a candidate for the office of Deputy Sea-Coal Meter, which, if he gets into it, will give him and his wife bread. He has not a single friend in the Common Council, and knows no one to introduce him, but Dr Evans of Islington,

of whose Church his mother is a member, and he is one of the congregation. How I stood with the Common Councilmen *at one time* I know well—how I stand with them *now* I pretty well guess—they are men “of credit and renown,” and *I* am in poverty and distress. Now I cannot write a creature besides yourself on the subject, and I send you this letter by him, intreating that you will confer a kindness on me, in the midst of my mishaps, by aiding him to the utmost of your influence with such of the Coal Committee as you can bring it to bear upon. This solicitation to you is all the assistance I can give him, and, to be brief, I would desire each word a mouth, and each letter a tongue, to eloquently express my earnest desire for your friendship in his behalf. I believe I need say no more.

If Mrs Fox will be pleased to accept my kind remembrances and you will convey them to her I shall be gratified. I have been separated from my family nearly six weeks during which time they were homeless. We have got together again within the last ten days in a little house by ourselves. Hoping that your health (which I have heard of frequently and diversely) is improving with the improving weather.

I am, my dear sir, yours sincerely,

W. HONE.

Six weeks before the date of this letter, Hone, who had just commenced the publication of his *Every Day Book*, had been arrested for debt, and confined in the King's Bench, from which he had just emerged. He continued to work on the *Day Book*, drifted insensibly out of politics into antiquarianism, embraced evangelical views in religion, and ended his days in peace.

CHAPTER III

ELIZA FLOWER—HARRIET MARTINEAU

DURING the latter half of the period of Fox's life sketched in the last chapter, side by side with his manifold activity as preacher and publicist, a silent current of private affection stole on, more influential in moulding his character and his destiny. He was still traversing the first of the three stages to which he thus adverted in a letter he, verging on seventy-three, wrote to his daughter on the last day of 1858 :—

What an immense array of Christmases and New Years I look back upon ! It is almost frightful. And in what a variety of connections and relations have they found and left me ! It would be a phantasmagoria of figures could I paint all the dinners and people. All the first batch was cleared off long ago—the second have almost all followed—and the succeeding set, if so it can be called, is very inferior to either. I am making up my accounts, and I think it is time. I wish you less variety and more continuity.

Variety rather than continuity does indeed on a superficial view appear the note of Fox's exterior history. When he penned the above words, he felt conscious of having traversed numerous regions of activity, and left many things behind him. He was no longer preacher, lecturer, journalist, literary or dramatic critic ; his political energies were now restricted to the occupation of a seat in the House of Commons, where the failure of his

physical strength no longer allowed him to be conspicuous, and to the composition of a weekly letter for a newspaper. Looking back upon even the most stirring episodes of his life, he no doubt felt how slight the bond of inner union between him and many of his most distinguished associates had been ; and how in particular, although he had embraced Unitarianism from the most sincere conviction, he had always been rather among the Unitarians than of them. During the period from 1820 to 1830 which we have just been traversing, the merely sectarian interests of the preceding decade were rapidly becoming effete. Yet the later phase was but an outcome of the first : the friendships which render this period particularly important in Fox's life grew out of his denominational connection : seeming " variety " was real " continuity." He could not have been Harriet Martineau's guide and philosopher for however short a period if she had not been a Norwich Unitarian ; nor Stuart Mill's ally if Mill's Egeria, Mrs Taylor, had not been a member of his congregation ; nor but for a similar relation could he have found his own Egeria in her who brought music and poetry into the life of the preacher and the publicist. But for Eliza Flower, the fame of William Johnson Fox might have hardly passed the limits of his denomination. Enthusiastic feeling was in him singularly allied with inertness of physical temperament. He caught fire readily, but his ardour was rather imparted from without than engendered within : he would follow a leader eagerly until his eagerness brought him also into the front rank, but he rarely displayed the faculty of initiative. It is not without significance that perhaps the only occasion in his life on which he struck out a line for himself to which he was not impelled by the current of circumstance, his purchase of *The Monthly Repository*, occurred shortly after the death of Eliza Flower's father, placing Fox in a fiduciary relation to Eliza and her sister as their trustee, had associated them more

closely in external things. The inner relation between all three had long been intimate, and may be dated from the joint ascent of Ben Lomond, already mentioned, on 8th September 1823, an anniversary long observed by all of them.

Eliza and Sarah Flower were the daughters of Benjamin Flower, celebrated in the history of the English press as the victim of an iniquitous prosecution for a free comment on what he deemed the political inconsistency of Bishop Watson, which the House of Lords considered, Flower remarks, a breach of privilege, and avenged its own dignity rather than the injuries of the Bishop (who took no action on his own behalf, and had not even seen the article when proceedings were commenced) by six months' imprisonment in Newgate and a fine of a hundred pounds. Flower was at the time conducting *The Cambridge Intelligencer*, a journal distinguished by its independence and by the occasional contributions of Coleridge, six of whose poems it gave to the world, and whose benediction it received in the shape of a recommendation to the subscribers to his expiring *Watchman*. The themes were extracted from martyrdom by one upon whose head he had himself unwittingly brought tribulation. There can hardly be a stronger indication of the vehemence of the recoil from liberal principles occasioned by the excesses of the French Revolution than that Miss Eliza Gould, schoolmistress at South Molton, Devon, had to choose between her school and *The Cambridge Intelligencer*. Persisting in her allegiance to her political guide, she emancipated her pupils and repaired to the cell of the imprisoned editor, bestowed her heart on the spot, and her hand upon his release. She died in April 1810, leaving two young daughters, Eliza (born 19th April 1803), the most distinguished hitherto among English female composers, and Sarah (born 22nd February 1805), not the least among English poetesses. At the time of Mrs Flower's

death Benjamin Flower was carrying on the business of a printer at Harlow, where he and his wife and both his daughters are interred. Some years later he removed to Dalston, where Fox then resided, and the friendship of the two was cemented by, if it did not originate in, their mutual admiration for Shakespeare. Flower and his gifted children participated in these readings, and attained maturity just as their no less gifted pastor, admired and caressed everywhere but inside his own threshold, was learning to repeat with Douglas :—

I never asked of thee that ardent love
Which in the breasts of fancy's children burns.
Decent affection and complacent kindness
Were all I wished for, but I wished in vain.

Both the bequests of heredity and the circumstances of education had prepared Eliza and Sarah Flower to sympathise with the public display and private discontent in the position of Fox. "Their bringing up," says Mrs Bridell Fox, "had been original and erratic. A few masters, the best that the little country village of Harlow afforded, a few lessons from the father and a good deal of travelling about the country in an old-fashioned one-horse chaise with the idea of cultivating their powers of observation, which led to many adventures. Eliza early developed a rare talent for music, and surprised her music master, the village organist, with compositions of her own while still a child." Music was indeed the life of Eliza Flower, and while, as will be seen, perfectly fit and perfectly ready to guide and regulate a troubled household, she existed by preference in a world of beautiful sound. To the friends of her early years she seemed to live but for music. Her figure at this time is thus depicted in Harriet Martineau's early work, *Five Years of Youth, or Sense and Sentiment* (1831) :—

He was delighted with Mary's singing, which was very unlike what he had heard from any other English young lady. She had been well taught, but she had that natural taste for music, the ear and the soul for it, without which teaching is of little avail. She sang much and often, because she loved it, because, as she said, she could not help it. She sang to the nurse's children, she sang as she went up and downstairs; she sang when she was glad, and when she was sorry. When her father was at home, because he liked it; when he was out, because he would not be disturbed by it. In the woods at noonday she sang like a bird that a bird might hear her; and if she woke in the night she said that the feeling of solemn music came over her, in the which she dared not break the silence. Everything suggested music to her, every piece of poetry which she knew and liked formed itself into melody in her mind without effort. When a gleam of sunshine burst out, she gave voice to it; and long before she had heard any cathedral music the chanting of the Psalms was familiar to her by anticipation. When the sisters sat at work in the balcony, their voices would ring out clear and sweet by the hour together. Anne had a good ear, and a much richer voice, but not quite so prevailing a love for the art.

Miss Martineau proceeds to depict the girls' surviving parent as "Mr Byerley," whose prejudice against schools kept his daughters at home, and who refused to hearken to his friends' advice to import "a respectable elderly lady" to fill up the measure of what was lacking in himself. "He declared his determination to educate them himself, independently of all assistance except that of masters for accomplishments. For such a task he was well qualified by high principle and extensive information, and what is valuable and beautiful in female character, but he had some eccentricities which were likely to impair the effects of his most earnest and judicious endeavours. He was also much engaged in public life, and had therefore less command of his time than was desirable on account of his children." Hence it would come to pass that "if Mary [Eliza] had a silk bonnet, and Anna [Sarah] a straw, the

one was used as a cradle for the kitten, and the other as a basket to hold strawberries." The mother was evidently badly wanted ; yet, however Benjamin Flower may have failed in his too presumptuous endeavour to be both father and mother to his girls, he did for them what was chiefly needful by kindling and fostering their highest aspirations. " They never remembered having been weary of reading the Bible with their father ; for he made them understand it clearly, as far as they went ; he allowed and encouraged them to talk freely on the themes which made religion interesting ; and his voice was never so soft or his manner so tender as at those times."

The Flower sisters seem also to have supplied the models of the Ibbotson girls in Miss Martineau's chief novel, *Deerbrook*. Her description of the extemporaneous and almost involuntary character of Eliza Flower's " wood-notes wild " offers an epitome of her mental constitution. She was emphatically a child of nature, open and transparent as the day. She worshipped Mozart, Shakespeare, Milton, Burns, Byron, but if these had never existed, Eliza Flower would still have been Eliza Flower. While this independence and spontaneity gave an indescribable charm to her character, they were not wholly favourable to her in the world of Art. Music came so naturally to her that she never realised the importance of strenuous study, and such a professional training as, indeed, it would probably have been beyond her means to procure. When we read of the enormous pains which the greatest masters of the art have found needful, we must think with astonishment of this young girl with so slender a technical equipment, claiming a place at the head of English female composers acknowledged in her own day. She was also distinguished as an instrumental performer. Affection, no doubt, largely prompted this enthusiastic tribute from sister, but there must have been more than can be accounted for by affection alone :—

I longed for you yesterday to be the recipient, as I was, of doubled and redoubled good. A new anthem of Mendelssohn's translated by Lizzie :—you would have *religioned* in it, and her enjoyment of it, and her rendering all its beauties doubly beautiful. “As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God !” Just the suggestion of the image, then the activity of the desire—then consummation in utterance—then the rest after it ; all conveyed by inspired simple, fervent, musical expression. Lizzie the while, with heart, soul, voice, finger, frame, seeming all but borne upward by the strain, as on wings to heaven. There are not many, would these were more, for her own soul's good, who can fly in her track.

How much higher Eliza Flower's place might have been with adequate training and the inspiring influence of someone who might have been to her in the world of sound what Fox was in the world of thought may be surmised by those acquainted with the beautiful strains fitly wedded to beautiful words, which still form part of the services of Finsbury Chapel, South Place. It is sufficient to note here that the title of the publication which originally included them, *Adoration, Aspiration, and Belief*, accurately expresses the quality of her genius, which, in thought as in art, was purely lyrical, and in no respect plastic. She moved lightly in ærial regions, always happiest when most

Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
Which men call earth.

It is characteristic of the general impression created by Eliza Flower that she should have been familiarly known to her intimates as “Ariel.” Mrs Bridell Fox, who has left a sketch of her taken from memory, the only one extant, thought her very like another fragile woman of genius, Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

It will be well to introduce even at this early stage of Eliza Flower's history an example of her correspondence,

the only literary memorial she has bequeathed. The almost total loss of her letters of the period of which we are treating compels recourse to letters of a later date. It is only necessary to premiss that the tragic death which elicited the letter occurred at Manchester on 23rd September 1836.

CRAVEN HILL,
Thursday [October 6th, 1836].

. . . But Friday the 7th it is now,—for there is no such thing as Time in the world of affection. If she kept a calendar, her dates would be thoughts, and her red letter days those aspirations which are fullest and brightest of memories and hopes. My blessing on my Katie's day: and I will keep it again with her to-morrow: it was very misty in the early morning, but I will look out again at daybreak to-morrow, and surely it will be sunshine—sunshine such as my heart would create whenever it looks wistfully on hers. Dear Katie! If there was a time when I used to think of you with fear and trembling, that is past, and I am all hopeful for you, my own sweet friend. I used to think that you would find it awesome hard work to unite the beautiful and the suffering with the true and the good, so as to realise in your external world that peace, which, once got at, no external world, under, or rather in the midst of heaven can have any power over—but I fear no longer, you fear no longer, do you? Are you not happy, and will you not always be happy, come outward change as it may—change that leaves the sense of affection unimpaired. Alas I preach what I do not practise. What is to be done with this horrible death monster? To tell you all I have, and am still (not exactly suffering so much as) not enjoyed and not enjoying as I otherwise should be, and ever since I heard the words *Malibran is dead*, would be almost to make you think me weak or affected, or something which would not give you pleasure to connect with your thought of me,—even you who know me pretty well. It was not so much the actual personal loss, nor the un-endurable affectingness, nor the contrast of that which was and is now, nor the consciousness that a beauty and glory is utterly gone, never to be realised *exactly* the same, so long as this world lasts—and, if there is another, we shall

want, with our added capacities, something different, so never—but it was not this—but it has seemed to make Death so present to me, as to paralyse life itself. It goes into all I do, into all my pursuits, my thoughts and feelings, or rather it stands before them, a sort of dead wall, and if one's eyes do make pictures when they are shut,¹ I see nothing but graves, and even they, it requires some energy to fill out of the nothingness which a sort of "where's-the-use" sensation has enveloped me in as in a dark pall. But now the very love that should indemnify for suffering seems actually to take part with Death as if like Christabel and the serpent lady it looked upon the horrid object till it became like it. Do you understand this? Of course heaven will shine out in the far distance presently—and we shall listen surprisedly to the memory of her sweet voice singing, "blest are the departed" (she wept dear soul when I heard her sing those words) and we shall (see) it all more clearly. What a comfort it would be, Katie, if Death were to come in all his terrors as the good people say, in outward and visible presence of storm or earthquake or fire and not of the ordinary methods of nature's ways, so that we could see him *strike the blow*. 'Tis the silent operation of the being itself that is the worst of it, a succession of little accidents—nothing unusual—one of which if avoided it might all have been well upon the outward frame-work which holds all the rest together, and it all is shattered to ashes,—but this very profligate talking,—and I did not know how my paper was going.

I have got her picture—it was the likeness he thought the most like, and I look upon it till I fancy it is—she looks happy with the little crucifix by her side, and the fresh flowers hanging over her, even when they cast their shadows upon her sweet face. How beautifully the Manchester people have felt and done—the delicacy with which they acted from first to last—the good taste—the deep feeling—more than all the liberality of opinion, such as would have been shown not in France, in some respects freer France, which the clergy, magistrates, etc., evinced. I do, yes I do like to think of these. The circumstance that while the Catholic service, crucifix, tapers and all, was being performed over her, the Cathedral bell was tolling, bring tears that do one good and are a comfort,—she, an

¹ "My eyes make pictures when they're shut."

Coleridge, *A Day Dream*.

actress—a catholic—a many years mistress—ah—Genius. But I suppose the fact is the folk were feeling she had made them thrill, and the thrill was yet warm.

The human passion of this letter needs no comment. In the hands of Elizabeth Browning it would have become a lyric, but would not thus have gained anything in depth.

It is further noteworthy that Eliza Flower was an exception to the rule that in the case of intense affection between man and woman equally interested in subjects of deep moment, the feminine mind derives its ideas from the masculine. "When a woman writes," remarks that wicked scoffer Heine, "she has always one eye upon the paper and the other upon some man : and this is true of all female writers without exception, saving only the Countess Hahn-Hahn, who has but one eye." It might therefore be naturally expected that Eliza Flower's ideas would be imbibed from her friend and teacher Fox, who had doubtless rendered her great service in emancipating her from the fossilised Unitarianism of her father's circle, but of whom she could be no implicit follower in the domain of speculative thought, for not only was her spirit stronger and deeper, but it abode by preference in the realm of mystery and awe. The clear and practical intellect of Fox, on the other hand, impatient to translate feeling into assured conviction, and untroubled by "obstinate questionings," cut its way by short processes to definite conclusions, not only enduring the human spirit with immortality but providing it with profitable occupation in its new environment. His conception, thus eloquently expressed in a passage from an unpublished discourse, differs from Eliza Flower's, as the terrestrial paradise differs from the land behind the sun and the moon :—

I am immortal—eternally God's servant in God's blessed work of beneficence. Reaping happiness in sowing happiness ; such is my duty and delight, here and hereafter. Blessing



ELIZA FLOWER
From a drawing by Mrs. E. Bridell Fox

myself in blessing others ; this is my ministry. With the feeblest powers of man, through all the progression, I shall pass to the mightiest energies of angel or archangel. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Send me forth on the work now that shall buy my everlastingness. In whatever way it may be, however seemingly remote from direct reference to religion or futurity, advancing earth's good in preparing for heaven's occupation. There is not a shout of deliverance, or a murmur of gratitude, any more than a song of devotion, but what is a prelude to the chorus of the spirits of the just made perfect. I am immortal, I become so by death.

Sarah Flower's correspondence with Fox in those early days was probably not less copious than Eliza's, but nothing remains of it except one letter of interest and a discursive familiar epistle, addressed to Fox, when in the Isle of Wight, a passage of which may be quoted as illustrative not only of her regard for him, but of the affection for her sister which was the very core and main-spring of her existence :—

KIMBOLTON, *Monday Night*.
[Postmark, Sept. 7. 1827.]

Can any good come out of Kimbolton ? Ask Lizzie, and when she has given her decided negative, what will you say to my being so excited that I dare not think of sleep though it is past twelve o'clock. A lad of eighteen has been preaching his first sermon. And what with the delight at it such as it was, and the agony of his flushing face, quivering lips, and tremulous voice, O dear me ! it is such a way that I am in ! And what a night it is, and what a farewell the sun gave, and how exquisitely the moon rose and beamed her consolation for his absence ! And what are you all doing ? dreaming of the sea by whose side you lingered, just gazing on its wide (not to you waste of) waters, and then looking upwards to that other ocean the heavens, at that one star, which is my own representative to remind you that, though in quite another world, the light of my affection is often with you in unclouded undivided communion. Another look at the window, and those

trees with whose branches the moon makes filigree work ; and if you could but see, Lizzie's likeness in a sprig of jasmine—fragile, delicate thing, it is every way so like her with its fair starry blossom, bright leaves and exquisite fragrance.

I am yours ever and affectionately, SARAH FLOWER.

Sarah and her sister not long after their letter were called upon to endure the severest of trials. Their father died on 17th February 1829.

Fox thus described the funeral, in a letter to Eliza Flower :

It was such a beautiful and touching scene. I must write it down even if you cannot yet read it. But you will. Did I not see it for you, was I not there for you, was not your spirit with me and in me, or I should not have been so calm as I was. What a thrill, what a feeling as if I had supernaturally heard your voice, it was, when just as the sight at a little distance of those two or three white stones notified our approach, Mr D. quietly gave me your scrap. And then we were at the entrance of that ground. That field among fields only distinguished from them by its grassy hillocks and its two or three stones and its one monument, and its little belt of trees yet only in their young growth ; and not shutting it out from the community of the other fields though they show that it will one day be a seclusion, and from its gentle rise there was the country visible, and the top of the church and fragments of the town. And we were soon arranged ; we stood within the cottage (*that* being under the porch just outside the door, so as to be the centre of our semi-circle). In the centre of the room was a little rough desk at which Aspland stood. I was just on a level with him at his right. On my right stood old Mr Lindley leaning against the rustic doorway. Against the opposite doorpost, not leaning, stood Mr Rutt, his arms folded in his cloak, his face almost strangely solemn, his fine head slightly bowed. These two old men, contrasted but both old ;—both *his* school-fellows, seeming as though here at the portal of the grave—I could not help gazing on them. Next Mr Rutt stood Edward [Flower], how different ; his immense height, sallow look and that strange rolling of the eyes which he often has,

as if it rolled over things without seeing any. He was directly opposite me. The next opposite pair were Mr D. and Mr Aspland. Behind Edward stood some rustic in a coloured coat, then Mr Jones, fixed, his eyes more than glistening ; for every now and then a big tear rolled down. In the corner sat Mrs Jones, her head down. Directly behind Aspland and between him and the fire, were three or four looking, listening and wondering children. Behind and on the left of me were several cottagers, females, and in that corner the post next to Mr Jones, was Sarah—sitting and sobbing uninterruptedly. On the outside of the door ran in two lines, widening as they extended from Mr Rutt and Mr Lindley stood about twenty villagers, intermixed among whom were two or three better dressed people from J-r-b-y (not unknown to me) and a singular appearance given to the whole, yet in harmony, by the attendants from London. This extended beyond the porch on each side, opening so as to leave the view unobstructed. In a direct line from these, in the centre was its open home with its waiting tenant ; and beyond, the low circle of young trees ; and beyond, the fields and hills ; and beyond and above, the heavens then gloomy, but not frowning, gleaming yet serene. And Aspland read quietly the chapter in Corinthians, and his voice swelled, but not loudly in its triumphant close, and he spoke briefly of immortality and the Resurrection, and of his [Mr Flower's] firm faith, and of what it had done for him, when they came there before [referring to Mrs Flower's death] and of the sincerity of his heart and the happiness of his life, and of affection and of sorrow and of hope ; and the prayer was brief and solemn and fervent, and we moved, and we moved, and they were united.¹—And there was a benediction—and my friend was in my soul, and my soul was in prayer, and my hand was on that knot of grass that overhung them both—and it was over !!

The following fragment is almost the only letter from Fox anywhere near this period that has escaped destruction. It seems to have been prompted by the performance of a rival version of a ballad which Eliza had set to music :—

¹ Benjamin Flower and his wife in the same grave.

. . . I do not exactly know how it is that, admiration being the basis of love, as you have convinced me it is, that I do feel such confidence in your affection. For there is no quality on which it can be founded that I may not be surpassed in by people whom you have known, or may know hereafter. You like my voice, but Braham, Chapman and Harris beat me hollow there. In reading there are plenty of better readers, Tree, Hazlitt, Irving, etc.; in imagination and philosophy, there's Coleridge, Wordsworth, Wilson and Macaulay—as he will be—and the Opium Eater. My general benevolence you do not so much admire, which is my most characteristic moral quality. And I suppose plenty of people have that too. What is it then when analysed? What hold have I of you? And yet I know that you do love me most fervently and tenderly and I am most confident of your continued affection. Is your theory wrong after all? Or am I like Charles Sturtevant without wit enough to make out an inventory of my own excellences. Now *your* equal I have never met with, and supposing your superior should exist in the world, and be thrown in my way, yet as I had only a full perception of your claims on my admiration after having known you long and intimately, it is impossible that you should be displaced by another. I can never become sufficiently intimate with that imagined and imaginary superior of yours to give me actual knowledge and proof that she is your superior at all. Why not? There are some external reasons against it which did not exist in your case, and besides that nothing would impel me to cultivate such intimacy but affection, and that is already with you.

No human spirit can entirely suffice to another, nor can any one relation of life monopolise the entire existence. Emerson, while asserting that “given health and a day, he could ‘make the pomp of emperors ridiculous,’” admits that to that end the day must be subdivided into four days. “The dawn is my Assyria; the sunset and moonrise my Paphos, and unimaginable realms of faerie; broad noon shall be my England of the senses and the understanding; the night shall be my Germany of mystic philosophy and dreams.” The “unimaginable realms”

of Fox's nature were cared for by Eliza Flower ; for " the broad noon of the understanding " he was to find another associate. There is not a trace of sentiment in his friendship with Harriet Martineau : but of sturdy, sterling, cordial amity as remote from self-interest on the one hand as from romance on the other, it is an admirable and memorable example. Nor is it a less interesting study of friendship's limitations of the jars to which it is subject from the accidents of life, and its inevitable drawbacks when two persons with multitudinous affinities are nevertheless not cast entirely in the same mould.

Fox's friendship for Harriet Martineau originally rested on the same basis as his attachment to Eliza Flower, mutual help and service, but Eliza's ministration was in the things of the spirit, and he received infinitely more from her than Harriet Martineau could ever bestow. At the same time his intellectual relations with the latter were in one respect closer than those with Eliza Flower, their objects had more in common. Eliza's world was the realm of music ; and although Fox, as several of his essays attest, was keenly sensitive to the charm of melody, he had no technical knowledge, and no power of furthering Eliza's efforts otherwise than by sympathy. With Harriet Martineau's wide range of topics, on the other hand, he was perfectly at home, until mesmerism came to be included among them.

It is not probable that Fox had any acquaintance with the Martineau family while still a " Norwich weaver-boy," or even a bank clerk. But when his lot was cast elsewhere he embraced every opportunity of visiting his mother, and coming in the capacity of a Unitarian minister would naturally associate with the minister of the Octagon Chapel, and through him with the leading members of the Unitarian church. Had he had no previous acquaintance with Miss Martineau, he might not have been so ready

to respond to her proposal to contribute to the *Repository*. This, with its result, is thus narrated by herself :—

While I was at Newcastle, a spirited advertisement from the new editor of the Monthly Repository, Mr Fox, met my eye, appealing for literary aid to those who were interested in objects. I could not resist sending a practical reply, and when I heard, long afterwards, that when my name was mentioned to Mr Fox, before he issued his appeal, he had said that he wished for my assistance from the moment when he, as editor, discovered from the office books that I was the writer of certain papers which had fixed his attention : but that he could not specially invite my contributions while he had no funds which could enable him to offer due remuneration. His reply to my first letter was so cordial that I was animated to offer him extensive assistance ; and if he had then no money to send me he paid me in something more valuable—in a course of frank and generous criticism which was of the utmost benefit to me. His editorial correspondence with me was undoubtedly the occasion, and in great measure the cause, of the greatest intellectual progress I ever made before the age of thirty.

In the same spirit she said to him afterwards : “ You do not know what you have done for me, nor can I estimate it yet.”

After the disastrous banking failure which in June 1829 swept the family property away, and left Miss Martineau “ with precisely one shilling in my purse,” she wrote to inform Fox that she could no longer contribute gratuitously to the *Repository* :

Mr Fox replied by apologetically placing at my disposal the only sum at his command at that time—fifteen pounds a year, for which I was to do as much reviewing as I thought proper. With this letter arrived a parcel of nine books for review or notice. Overwhelming as this was, few letters that I had ever received had given me more pleasure than this. Here was, in the first place, work ; in the next, continued literary discipline under Mr Fox ; and lastly, this money would buy me clothes.

So to work I went, with needle and pen. It was truly *life* that I lived during those days of strong intellectual and moral effort.

Miss Martineau proceeds to narrate how Fox encouraged, or rather constrained her, to try her hand at writing tales ; and how the result of her efforts, *The Traditions of Palestine*, first made her name known in literature. The story of her progress is amply narrated in her letters to Fox, which the present writer may draw upon for material, although, as the reader is no doubt aware, quotation is prohibited by her testamentary injunctions. It is difficult to conceive how Miss Martineau could consider herself justified in adopting the line she took in this matter. She must have been aware that her letters would often be needed to defend the characters of others ; sometimes, though this she may not have realised, against her own hasty and uncharitable utterances. With a selfishness entirely at variance with her habitual character, she was willing to condescend to "the one base thing, to receive and not to give" ; profiting by the contributions of others, without making any of her own. The only reason, apart from personal distaste, which she assigns, that the world may have lost more by the injury to epistolary freedom than it has gained by reading the letters of non-consenting letter-writers, is invalidated by two simple considerations ; that her own letters exhibit no trace of a deficiency in "epistolary freedom" ; but much the reverse : and that there the number of "non-consenting letter writers" has been too small to be worth taking into account. Miss Martineau, unfortunately, thought the reverse ; she deemed that she could do herself more justice by deliberate self-portraiture than by a frank imparting of biographical material. Never was there a sadder miscalculation. Autobiography is a terrible ordeal, to which perhaps no one in our time but Stuart Mill has gained by submitting. Miss Martineau's memoirs un-

doubtedly lowered a character, with all its foibles, of most sterling worth, and which deserves to be accounted a precious national possession. The simple publication of every word she ever wrote to Fox, without addition or retrenchment, note or comment, would alone go far to restore her to the place she ought to occupy, and which she would always have enjoyed had she been content to refrain from a posthumous control over her correspondence. This is impossible, and nothing can be done but to convey the substance of the correspondence on her side, without infringing her directions in letter or spirit. The favourable impression as regards herself could but be enhanced if we had Fox's letters, which must evidently have been most honourable to her also. But, although Miss Martineau could not hermetically seal up the communications of her correspondents, she would seem to have taken the still more effectual course of destroying them. No trace of Fox's letters, at all events, appears to exist. We must be content with Harriet Martineau's own testimony in after years to "the accession of life which I received from and through him."

The account in the autobiography of Miss Martineau's connexion with the *Repository* is borne out by the correspondence, except that, while it might have been concluded that she wrote to Fox proffering her assistance immediately upon reading, at Newcastle, his appeal issued in September 1828, she in fact wrote from Norwich in the November following, when she forwarded "a packet of papers." She had been an occasional contributor to the *Repository* since 1821, when, as she informs us in the autobiography, she had timidly offered an essay by the persuasion of her brother James, and she honestly calls Fox's attention to the circumstance that one paper in the packet had been to the *Repository* office before, and had been returned on account of its length. The problem seems to have been solved by bisection, for the paper is probably identical

with the essay, "On the Agency of Feelings in the Formation of Habits," etc., an exposition of the association theory, which appeared in two parts in February and March 1828. "V.'s" "Ode to Liberty," in the January number, is a really ambitious performance, betraying acquaintance with Shelley's Ode in its structure and general cast of thought, and remarkable as a solitary instance of influence received from him. Wordsworth was more congenial; she wished to review his works at considerable length for the *Repository*, and it is much to be regretted that the intention was not fulfilled. The influence of Wordsworth upon her mind would have been hardly less interesting a study than the parallel instance in the case of Stuart Mill. She also speaks with sincere admiration of Coleridge, upon whom a masterly article had appeared in *The Westminster Review* for January 1828. It is interesting to see these great poets gaining friends among Radicals and Utilitarians when they were themselves petrifying into the most sterile Toryism. The general tone of the *Repository*, in truth, on the writings of opponents, was warm and generous. Fox found more to say for Keble than Keble could find to say for Milton. At the same time poetical charlatanism did not escape chastisement. In a brief notice of Robert Montgomery's "Satan," Miss Kimber anticipates Macaulay's memorable castigation of the author, in so far as relates to that poem. "Lord Byron somewhere remarks that it is difficult to make Lucifer talk like a clergyman; in overcoming that difficulty Mr Montgomery has been particularly successful, and his Satan's harangues of pure raptures, divine contemplations by moonlight, and hallelujahs of all kinds and degrees, in a strain that would do credit to Doddridge or Klopstock." Miss Kimber is particularly amused at Satan's enjoyment of "the pealing incense" of "matin bells," erroneously supposed in the Middle Ages to have the property of driving him away.

As already stated, the financial disaster of 1829 incited Miss Martineau to redoubled effort, and private regard conspired with the well-understood interest of his magazine to induce Fox to devote every penny that could be spared to her remuneration. The following year was the *annus mirabilis* of her connection with the *Repository*, which would have fared badly without her aid. The most important though the least original of her papers is the virtual introduction to Britain of a book destined to exert wide influence, Lessing's *Education of the Human Race*. It is not a translation but a paraphrase of Lessing's *Hundred Thoughts*, which had been literally translated in the *Repository* twenty-four years before without exciting much attention. The volume also had, from her, pen essays on Government and "on the proper use of the retrospective faculty"; her interesting stories, "The Hope of the Hebrew" (a specimen of the *Traditions of Palestine*, published this year), "Solitude and Society," and "True Worshippers"; full reviews of Doddridge's correspondence and Scott's *Demonology and Witchcraft*, and many minor pieces, including several poems. As a poetess Harriet Martineau always commands respect by sound sense and genuine feeling, but the thoughts are in general obvious and the diction conventional. Once she soared far above her ordinary level, her noble lyric, "The Harvests of Time," her contribution to the "Songs of the Months," published in the *Repository* for 1834 with music by Eliza Flower and used as a hymn in the services of Finsbury Chapel.

Miss Martineau's letters to Fox are rich in varied interest. As has been implied, no one would gain so much from their publication as the writer. They would rectify the false impression which she has given of herself in her autobiography, "the least worthy of her true self," says her excellent biographer Mrs Fenwick Miller, "of all the writings of her life." There the representation of a continual conflict with all manner of obstacles real and

imaginary invests the entire spiritual physiognomy with an aspect of hardness and self-assertion. Such, it is plain, were nor the distinguishing characteristics of the writer of these letters, rather was she swayed by a constant craving for sympathy, and an affectionate desire to bestow it where she could expect a return. After her adored brother, James, Fox at the time stood highest upon her list of friends; he understood her, she thought, better than anyone but James, the unique and incomparable. Her gratitude seems especially evoked by Fox's sympathy with essays written about the middle of 1832 for *Tait's Magazine*, which do not seem to be mentioned in her autobiography. One, relating to woman, she says she wrote with indescribable emotion. She speaks of the possibility of her contributing to the *Quarterly* or to the *Edinburgh*, remarking sarcastically that the dearth of qualified contributors is most encouraging to boys fresh from college, whose essays are welcomed and inserted immediately. This would have been literally true of Henry Taylor, but the allusion is probably to Macaulay. She would fain have written for the *Westminster*, but is precluded from making any overtures by an insuperable antipathy to the editor, Bowring, the cause of which she leaves to conjecture. Poor Bowring, equally obnoxious to the Mills and Miss Martineau! At a later period, however, Bowring's direct editorial connection having probably ceased, she is wishful to review Macnish on "Sleep" for the *Westminster*, and also Southey's *Colloquies with Sir Thomas More*, which contemporaneously afforded so much scope for the satire of Macaulay. Within a few years her memorable article upon *The Martyr Age of the United States* gave her a leading place among contributors to the *Westminster*. Much of Harriet Martineau's early correspondence is occupied by religious topics. It is interesting to remark that she was occupied by difficulties about the administration of the Lord's Supper at the same time as

Emerson, for the cause which made him resign his pulpit is the same which makes her hesitate about republishing her *Devotional Exercises*, written in 1823. Her Unitarian feeling was evidently stronger than she was afterwards willing to allow; her desire to serve "the Cause" is the principal motive she assigns for writing before the loss of her property had made writing a necessity. Her enthusiasm may no doubt have been chilled by the unedifying disputes in the Octagon Chapel at Norwich, and by the grudging support acceded by Unitarians to the *Repository*; while, says Miss Martineau, small knots of Baptists and Independents, though entirely at variance with its opinions, take it in, and discuss its articles at their monthly gatherings. Her letters sometimes contain conscious previsions of her future work. In August 1829 she thinks that she will soon be writing a novel, if not decidedly discouraged by her Mentor. Her choice of a subject shows observation and ingenuity. No one, she remarks, has yet treated an election properly in fiction. She could not foresee that the electoral humours of her own city would within a few years afford matter for the mirth of Dickens; or anticipate the admirable treatment of the subject in Bulwer's *What will he do with it?* Fox does not appear to have encouraged the idea, which indeed would not have suited a professedly religious magazine as the *Repository* then was; but he responded with a suggestion which produced the *Traditions of Palestine*. Late in 1831 comes the startling statement that she has made some progress with an autobiography, which was not, therefore, a new idea with her when she began to play with one in 1843. The earlier recension would have been the more authentic, for these letters supply abundant evidence that, although never wilfully misstating anything, she allowed feelings engendered in later years to usurp the place of actual perception. She appears, for instance, to complain of her publisher Charles Fox, upon

a general view of his conduct, and not with reference to a particular misunderstanding. The letters show that, until the occurrences of this misunderstanding, she was entirely satisfied with him. The remark of her brother James (*Life and Letters*, vol. i. p. 8) is perfectly well-founded :

I do not think that anyone but myself, who have just gone over all the correspondence from my 15th to my 42nd year, can appreciate the extent to which Harriet's ultimate mood and estimates of things transformed and distorted her seeming memories of early life. The limitation of her external senses reduced her outward experience to a fainter impressiveness than that of her most vivid ideal states ; so that the intense dreams and contrasts of the present eclipsed and modified the images of the past.

Miss Martineau's correspondence with Fox throws light on the history of her *Illustrations of Political Economy*, the book which made her famous. She has told us in the autobiography that the idea first occurred to her in 1827, when reading Mrs Marcet's *Conversations on Political Economy* but nothing more is related until, in the summer of 1831, we find her planning the work at Dublin, and at the end of that year struggling desperately to find a publisher. Her correspondence shows her, in September 1829, telling Fox that she may trouble him with some little works setting forth those troubles of political economy which it is most important for the working classes to know. In October she sends him two stories already in print, one written at the request of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire gentlemen who have been afflicted by strikes, and promises to offer him one on the subject of enclosing commons. The stories in print must have been *The Rioters* and *The Turn-Out*, mentioned in her autobiography as published by Houlston, and for each of which, as it now appears, she received fifteen pounds. The story on enclosures was not intended for the *Repository*, but was

sent to Fox in November with a request that he would find a publisher, accompanied by remarks on the utility of such stories, the ease with which they could be produced, and the boundless field of subject open to the storyteller, which sufficiently prove that the idea had already taken deep hold of her. She has herself told us how she eventually found a publisher in Fox's brother Charles, on terms which cannot be considered onerous, remembering the example set him by the publishers who had declined her work, and his own lack of capital. From that time until Miss Martineau's settlement in London there are few of her letters to Fox without allusion to the triumphant success of the series, or her own satisfaction or discontent with particular numbers, or requests for aid or information.

It is mortifying to have to add that the publication of the latter numbers of the series was accompanied by a misunderstanding between Harriet Martineau and her publisher, reference to which would have been needless but for the prominence which she has given it in her autobiography. The point at issue was simple: the twenty-four numbers of which the series was originally designed to consist having been extended to thirty, was the publisher to have half profits upon the additional numbers, as with their predecessors, or merely a commission on the sale? Miss Martineau writes as though wrong had been done her by the mere suggestion: in fact, however, she states in this correspondence that the proposal had originally her full assent, and that she had altered her mind by the advice of friends. Charles Fox's assumption that matters would continue as they had been does not appear outrageous; while Miss Martineau might fairly see the matter in a different light. Fox supported his brother's view in an able letter, but Miss Martineau was immovable. She was, indeed, mistress of the situation: she was under no obligation to publish her new stories with Charles Fox, and if pressed would simply have brought them out under

a different title and with a different publisher. There appears no trace of resentment against Fox, to whom she continued to write cordially : yet the closeness of their friendship was undoubtedly impaired for the time by another misunderstanding, without which the difficulty about publication might perhaps never have existed.

This arose from that remarkable episode in Miss Martineau's literary life, the composition of her *Poor Law Tales*. These owed their origin to the impulsiveness of Lord Brougham, to whom the first five numbers of the *Illustrations of Political Economy* were sent by Thomas Drummond, afterwards celebrated as Irish Secretary. Lord Brougham had probably already heard that one of the tales now so boundlessly popular had been rejected as "dull" by a sub-committee of his own peculiar bantling, the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. He could not but perceive that this had been a great mistake, and anxiety to get the sibyl and her books back again and desire to enlist an able pen in aid of his own, in this instance perfectly disinterested and public spirited, purposes. He therefore proposed that Miss Martineau should write a series of tales exposing the evils of the Poor Law. In itself the notion was entirely reasonable. Of all the benefit conferred by the Reform administration on the country the greatest was the enactment of the New Poor Law, and none of their measures was equally unpopular. A writer in Miss Martineau's position might be expected to produce a powerful and salutary impression upon public opinion, and no one who knows Harriet Martineau will disbelieve her assurance that her sole incentive to the undertaking was the hope of promoting the general good. But she had another work in hand which she was bound to complete and which was as yet far from completion : and her tales were to be published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, a body which was far from enjoying her good opinion in all respects. "It was hardly right in

me," she admits in her autobiography, "to listen to any invitations for further work." At first, indeed, she declined to undertake anything fresh until her tales of political economy should be completed, but there was force in the rejoinder that the settlement of the Poor Law question could not be delayed until Miss Martineau should have cleared off her outstanding literary engagements. Brougham wrote a marvellous letter of four sheets to a joint friend, Mr C. H. Bellenden Ker, Liberal candidate for Norwich and an active member of the Diffusion Society, in which he declared that the society's sub-committee which had rejected Miss Martineau's tale ought to be hanged and, disregarding Sydney Smith's admonition "to take short views," carried his gaze so far into futurity as to discern her, the Poor Law reformed, annihilating Atheism. At length he addressed her himself :

BERKELEY SQUARE,
Thursday [October, 1832].

MADAM,—I assure you that I expressed less admiration in my letter to Mr Ker than I felt, and not more.

This has been increased since I wrote, for I have since read the other four. You are so kind as to send me them, but I had not patience to wait, and had them sent me from town.

I need hardly say that the only one of your conditions to which I feel the least reluctance in subscribing is that of postponement. I would fain hope that something may occur to enable you to hasten a little the performance of what I really deem of the greatest public importance.

What happened in our Sub-Committee is wholly unaccountable. I feel the deepest regret ; for I am sure the character of our whole Society suffers by it. To you it is wholly immaterial.

Believe me, with great respect, your faithful Servant,

BROUGHAM.

Miss Martineau came to London, and the Chancellor waited personally upon "the little deaf woman from Norwich." Nothing could be more satisfactory than their

colloquy, whether as regarded Miss Martineau's remuneration or, what she valued more, her independence. The Diffusion Society's committee were not to see the books any sooner than the public, no one was to inspect them but the Chancellor himself, and he was to interfere only by suggestion. She was to write three tales in 1833 and twelve in 1834:¹ and, with regard to remuneration, just as she was opening her mouth to propose £50 for each story, the Chancellor stopped it by the offer of £100. All seemed well, and yet an undertone in Harriet Martineau's letters reveals a certain uneasiness lest she should seem to be passing from one political camp to another. Her motives were of the purest, yet she must have been inwardly conscious that she was not entirely unaffected by the caresses and flatteries she was receiving not only from Brougham but from Grey and Durham. Fox on his part, while perfectly sincere in disliking the new alliance, was probably more influenced than he knew by the inevitable reflection that it would have been a most felicitous arrangement if the new series could have been published by his brother, instead of by the society. He wrote Miss Martineau a letter of caution which she characterises as wise and valuable, and which, were it extant, would probably be found to sum up the entire situation. The general state of the case may be conjectured from a letter of Miss Martineau of somewhat later date, in which, after speaking with delight of the revival of the blessed old times by a visit she has been paying Fox, she mentions as the only drawback the suspicion under which she lay of abated Radicalism; but she will prove that it is one thing to enjoy the conversation of the most intellectual man in the world, and another to approve his measures and have confidence in his principles. The statement,

¹ She says in her autobiography that she "was steady in refusing to write more than four altogether." This may have been the arrangement ultimately made, but her statement in her letter to Fox of 10th December 1832 is as above.

therefore, in her autobiography that she "never liked" Brougham, is another proof of her liability, like the mature Wordsworth reflecting upon the youthful Wordsworth's nutting expedition, to

Confound the present feelings with the past.

Fox's dissatisfaction, meanwhile, simmered until in June 1833 it was relieved by a review in the *Repository* of Miss Martineau's first Poor Law story, *The Parish*, which, though cordially appreciative of the ability of the book, must have galled the authoress by the warning that her connection with the Diffusion Society might render her "a less efficient, because less trusted, national instructor." Nay, "the evil in part is already come upon her." How otherwise, when she had actually been patted on the back by *The Edinburgh Review*, a wretched creature who

dislikes Miss Martineau's independence, fears her energy, stands aghast at her consistency in following out a principle to its consequences, and, regarding her as a female Samson, would under this pretext of fever, shear the locks in which lies her strength, take her from, and unfit her for, her high vocation, and send her to grind, blindly and uselessly in the mill of Conservative Whiggism.

If Miss Martineau was a female Samson, the reviewer (Empson) must assuredly have been a male Delilah! Fox goes on to vindicate Miss Martineau's claim to the "accurate observation and patient thought" which the Edinburgh reviewer has denied her, but at the same time to dispute the "inspiration and imagination" which he has discovered in her. His remarks are entirely just, but he is touching on perilous grounds. Miss Martineau replied good naturedly at the time, but when afterwards she and Fox were at variance upon a more delicate subject, it became evident that the admonition and its occasion had left considerable soreness in both minds. In her autobiography, though never naming Fox in this connec-

tion, Miss Martineau acknowledges that he was substantially right :—

I do not repent doing these tales, because I hope and believe they were useful at a special crisis ; but they never succeeded to anything like the extent of my own Series ; and it certainly appeared that all connection with the Diffusion Society and Lord Brougham and the Whig Government was so much detriment to my usefulness and my influence.

In fact, only four stories were published, and Miss Martineau did not receive her full due even for these. She was, as has been seen, to have received £100 for each : £75 from the society, and the remainder guaranteed by Lord Brougham. The society fulfilled its contract, but not one penny of Lord Brougham's money was ever forthcoming. Miss Martineau was too magnanimous to press him ; and it is due to her to record the conviction that the acerbity with which she speaks of him is in no degree to be attributed to this incident, but to his attacks at a later period, assuredly most mischievous and unprincipled, upon the Canadian mission of the one statesman she really venerated, Lord Durham.

One of the most interesting sections of Harriet Martineau's correspondence with Fox is that comprising the letters written from the home of her brother James at Dublin, during a visit to Ireland in the summer of 1831. They show what grievous injustice she did herself in the autobiography, and no less how little, accurate as the book generally is in the relation of matters of fact, it can be relied upon for the delineation of subjective states of feeling. Miss Martineau says (p. 99) that her relation with her brother James had " reached its highest point, and had begun to decline " somewhere between 1820 and 1824. The fallaciousness of her recollection is shown by these letters, since it is impossible to conceive the relation carried to a greater height than they reveal, or a nearer approach to the ideal of sisterhood. Could they be

printed, they would be held to do Harriet Martineau at least as much honour as any of her writings, and to justify her own implication that the less amiable features of her character were due in great measure to the thwarting nature of her habitual surroundings. Removed to her brother's house, she seems a new creature. "I am in danger of forgetting in this holy home that there is vice and misery abroad. We are a blessed household now, in holiday time, thanks to their being people of this world as well as of the next." All things share the reflected brightness of her mood, saving only the Philistines who trouble James's peace. The repercussion of affection irradiates Fox also. He should see James, this day carpentering or gardening, the next composing a sermon, the next running wild upon the beach. James's position at this time was of a nature to evoke Harriet's sisterly devotion in full measure. It was nearly the position of Emerson in New England the year before, except that it was not so much concerned with points of doctrine as with other points, in Ireland deemed more worthy the attention of rational beings. James was indeed labouring under the imputation of heresy : but this was nothing to his unaccountable refusal to accept public money for preaching the Gospel. It must be owned that his objection to participate in the grant to Presbyterian ministers known as the *Regium Donum* may appear overstrained : one might have thought it a case for the application of Bishop Andrews's advice to James I. touching the monies of Bishop Neile. Things, however, exist as they are perceived : if Martineau thought, as he undoubtedly did, his conscience involved in the issue, his firmness did him honour : for he had every reason to expect that his congregation would no more allow him to forego a grant from the State than Emerson's would allow him to dispense with the administration of the Lord's Supper. Nor did they : soon after Harriet's departure James was con-

strained, to his and the world's great eventual benefit, to transfer himself to Liverpool.¹ At the time of Harriet's arrival he is writing a pamphlet on Church establishments to illustrate the *Regium Donum* question, to be published anonymously, and the authorship divulged to Fox alone. It never appeared, but its essence is probably to be found in the fine sermon preached in Finsbury Chapel in 1834. Meanwhile (the illustration is not Miss Martineau's) his condition is comparable to that of the fox who knew he had a wound but could not tell where, for he is not quite sure whether the petty annoyances he is enduring amount to persecution or not. When this is manifest, it will also be manifest that he has the soul of a Stephen. His gentleness and forbearance with these people—but here, as frequently in these letters, Harriet Martineau breaks off, unable to express her depth of feeling. She knows that there are those who would follow James on their knees through the world, and this is comfort more than proportionate to little troubles. She wishes Fox, meanwhile, to remit to her a trifling balance due for literary work, that she may have money at hand to help James if necessary. The lucrative *Illustrations of Political Economy*, it will be remembered, were not yet begun, and although she says that they were partly planned at Dublin, there is no hint of them in her letters to Fox.

Another point touched upon is the Dublin mission to the poor which James was striving to establish. The Unitarians are mostly indifferent, but not all. James, wise as a serpent, will get Mr Armstrong to preach the collection sermon, that the undertaking may be in good odour with the priest-riddlers who hold the purse. Good Dr Drummond cannot for the life of him understand the scheme, for there is no controversy in it. Does Fox think

¹ In a letter of 7th August 1832 Miss Martineau says: "The generous Liverpool folks have presented him with 100 guineas and a share in *The Athenæum*." This is not mentioned, so far as we have discovered, in the standard biography of Dr Martineau.

that it could be represented to him in the light of a controversy with the devil? One supreme aspiration of Harriet's is that the Unitarian Association would send James to Germany to inquire into the state of religion and bring home new lights. What would not such a man do? What vivifying relations would he not establish? He would take, he says, his sister with him, and she would pick up fine things for them and for the public. Alas! how true was the Methodist's observation to Emerson that we are always praying; that all prayers are granted; that it behoves us, therefore, to take heed for what we pray! James Martineau did go to Germany, and did return with abundant light, which, in Harriet's estimation, was but darkness, completing the abandonment of the necessarian philosophy which he had shared with her in 1831, but which since 1837 he had been gradually relinquishing. The change was in him, not in her. When in Ireland thought that if James's sermons could but be published, all the world must necessarily become necessarian forthwith, and his desertion of her creed must have been a great trial. The estrangement was purely intellectual, to the ordinary man unintelligible, but terrible to those who live in the world of ideas. No such severance was implied in the misunderstandings with Fox, which, though involving grave questions of opinion and even of conduct, left the parties in the same camp, and imperceptibly faded away. Of the once idolised brother Harriet can hardly bring herself to speak; of Fox and his circle she says:—

It amazes me now to think what liberality and forbearance were requisite in the treatment of me by Mr Fox and the friends I met with at his house, and how capable they were of that liberality. My Sabbatarian thickness, and my prejudices on a hundred subjects must have been absurd and disagreeable enough to them: but their gentleness, respect, and courtesy were such as I can remember with gratitude and pleasure. They saw that I was outgrowing my shell, and they had patience

with me till I had rent it and cast it off ; and if they were not equally ready with their sympathy when I had found freedom, but disposed to turn from me in proportion as I was able to take care of myself, to do the same office for other incipient or struggling beings, this does not lessen my sense of obligation to them for the help and support they gave me in my season of intellectual and moral need.

“ The friends I met with at his house ” denote the Miss Flowers, with whom, especially Eliza, Miss Martineau was for some years united in affectionate friendship.

CHAPTER IV

The Monthly Repository—MRS STUART MILL—JOHN STUART
MILL—ROBERT BROWNING—OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

“**A** PREACHING Friar,” says Carlyle, writing while Fox was editing *The Monthly Repository*, “settles in every village, and builds a pulpit, which he calls Newspaper.”

Fox never had a newspaper pulpit in his own right, though he homilised vigorously from the journalistic cathedral provided for him by others. But if Carlyle's definition of a nineteenth century pulpit may be extended to the inclusion of monthly magazines, he was for six years in possession of a pulpit from which he addressed a public select in quality and high principle, but in numbers also. This was *The Monthly Repository*, long the property and official organ of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. It had been established in 1805 by the Rev. Robert Aspland, of the Gravel Pit Chapel, Hackney, a staunch old-school Unitarian, “the formidable prime minister of his sect,” Miss Martineau calls him; like Fox, a self-made convert from Calvinism. As Homer's Ilium was superimposed upon the successive strata of five buried cities, so Aspland's *Repository* rose upon the ruins of three defunct magazines, the first of which had been established by Vidler in 1797.

Fox began to contribute to the *Repository* in 1823, chiefly literary notices. Aspland transferred his interest in the *Repository* to the Unitarian Association at the end of 1826, and Fox would seem to have become the editor shortly

afterwards. No considerable change, however, appears in the general tenor of the publication, though Harriet Martineau and J. J. Tayler become regular contributors, and one series of articles of Fox's own (1830) on the life of Thomas Belsham, the leading controversial champion of Unitarianism in his day, attracted extravagant admiration from James Martineau. "I never received so much delight and improvement in so short a space from anything out of the Bible." The essay was indeed remarkable for its recognition of the development of Unitarian preaching out of controversy into a general spirit of humanity, culminating for the time in Channing, but presageful of the Martineaus and Theodore Parkers of the future. The essay, nevertheless, like all the rest of the magazine, was composed from a denominational point of view, and Fox was ambitious of a wider sphere. In the following year (1831) he took the bold step of purchasing the *Repository* from the Unitarian Association, "at its full and fair worth," he says, and certainly he would not have been permitted to acquire it upon other terms. How the sinews of war were provided does not appear. Fox may have had monied friends, but there is no trace of anyone but himself having claimed a controlling interest in the magazine so long as he continued to conduct it.

Fox's venture forms in one respect an era in the history of English periodical literature, for it was the first endeavour to establish a monthly magazine corresponding to the great quarterlies in general elevation and seriousness of tone. *Blackwood*, *Fraser* (only just come into being) and *The New Monthly* were full of excellent reading, and frequently contained essays and fiction of first-class merit; yet a large proportion of their contents was designedly light and jocular, nor were they steadily animated by any lofty purpose. The only serious mission of *Blackwood* and *Fraser* seemed to be to bolster up Toryism; but even this was pursued in a spasmodic fashion. *Blackwood*, as

recent revelations have disclosed, while largely written by men of genius, was wholly directed by an astute publisher; while the conductor of *Fraser*, rather *primus inter pares* than a generalissimo, was as unprincipled a literary adventurer as Ireland ever quartered upon London. It might have been expected that there would have been room for a new periodical systematically devoted to the dissemination of the ideas in politics and literature which were actually characteristic of the age, and favoured by its most thoughtful and progressive intellects. Unfortunately the new series starts with the old series upon its shoulders. The *Repository* had a past. It could never purge itself from the reproach of having originally been a Unitarian organ. When R. H. Horne after a season arrayed himself in Fox's cast-off mantle he was presently fain to testify :—

We are still perseveringly considered a Unitarian magazine by the public, who persist in not reading us to see the absurdity of their opinion; and of course we have lost all the Unitarian connection, with lots of all other dissenters to boot, by being beyond all sectarianism.

This, written six years after Fox had assumed the management and proprietorship of the *Repository*, might indeed be regarded as proof of the loneliness of the furrow he had been ploughing, but for the sound rule that suffrages are to be weighed as well as counted. Though his readers had been few, they were with hardly an exception persons of ability whose powers had been exalted by the high intellectual level of the society they had kept. It is true that although Fox had in his editorial capacity successfully shaken off all sectarianism, the personnel of his staff was largely determined by his Unitarian connections. The two most distinguished, though not Unitarians, would hardly have been recruited by him but for their intimacy with members of his congregation. Harriet

Taylor, better known to fame as Mrs Stuart Mill, allured her future husband, and Eliza Flower and her sister brought Robert Browning. *Cherchez la femme !*

Harriet Mill occupies a position below her desert in the intellectual history of her time. This is in a measure unavoidable in the case of those who have left no tangible evidence of their power. The lot of gifted ladies is hard : if they write they are liable to be anathematised as "scribbling women," if they are content to guide and inspire, the reality of the invisible influence is called in question. Mrs Mill's celebrity has no doubt suffered from the apparent extravagance of the claim preferred by her husband upon her behalf. "Only John Mill's reputation," Grote said, "could survive such displays." The glowing character Mill has drawn of her mental perfections might pass as eulogy, but when comparison enters incredulity appears along with her. It is easy to believe that Mill "never presumed to judge Carlyle with any definiteness" until Mrs Taylor told him what he ought to think about him, but it does not follow that "her mind and nature included Carlyle's and infinitely more." Carlyle's description of her as "pale and passionate and sad-looking, a living romance heroine" confirms Mill's parallel of her "in general spiritual characteristics, as well as in temperament and organisation" to Shelley, but he should not have added, "In thought and intellect, Shelley, as far as his powers were developed in his short life, was but a child compared to what she ultimately became." After this, one is almost inclined to accept the remark attributed by Professor Bain to Mr Goldwin Smith, that "Mill's hallucination as to his wife's genius deprived him of all authority wherever that came in" : but upon comparison of the work performed by Mill after his acquaintance with her, with that which he had done before, it will be admitted that he was not the victim of hallucination but of a defective sense of proportion. It might have been

suspicious had he professed any obligation to her for his work on *Logic*, but he expressly exempts this from her influence. Such a treatise might well have been inspired by a person in other respects very ordinary : Mrs Taylor's influence required no ordinary feeling and faculty. His essay on Tennyson, with its appreciations of other poets and discussions of the principles of poetry in general, would have been impossible to Mill, when, not many years before, he had just sufficiently awakened to the mission of poetry to call in Wordsworth as a spiritual physician. The development can only be ascribed to the influence of Mrs Taylor, and as poetry is but the expression of emotion, the influence extended to every department of thought where reason may be coloured by feeling, and largely contributed to leaven Mill's mind with that Socialistic bias which so markedly distinguishes him from the earlier exposition of political economy. The tokens of Mrs Taylor's influence in this direction belong to a later period : Mrs Bridell Fox's reminiscence of her personal appearance and manner of fascination associates Carlyle's outline with the tints of affection :—

Mrs John Taylor at this date [about 1831], when she was, perhaps about five and twenty years of age,¹ was possessed of a beauty and grace quite unique of their kind. Tall and slight, with a slightly drooping figure, and movements of undulating grace. A small head, a swan-like throat, and a complexion like a pearl. Large dark eyes, not soft or sleepy, but with a look of quiet command in them. A low sweet voice with very distinct utterance emphasised the effect and enhanced the charm of her engrossing personality. Her children idolised her.

No reader of Mill's autobiography can fail to recognise his profound susceptibility to those influences which a gifted, beautiful and high-souled woman may be expected to bring into the existence of a man, perhaps not without

¹ She was two years younger.

surprise that it should have left so little trace except for the one overwhelming passion of his life. That Mrs Taylor did not absolutely monopolise his admiration may be gathered from his account of her "life of inward meditation, varied by familiar intercourse with a small circle of friends, of whom one only (long since deceased) was a person of genius, or of capacities of feeling or intellect kindred with her own." This can be no other than Eliza Flower. Fox on his part thought no less highly of the object of Mill's devotion than Mill of his, and his conviction rebukes the scepticism of those to whom she is known only through Mill. On 16th November 1858 he exclaims in a letter to Mrs P. A. Taylor: "Mrs Mill gone! so lovely once! so superb ever!" The next day he wrote to his daughter at Rome:—

The day you left came news of Miss Macready's death, poor good aunty! Next day came news touching me far more nearly. Mrs Mill died on the 3rd at Avignon. She would not have objected to being buried there, in the ground to which Petrarch has given a wide-world fame; and of which it might (if she remains) be said, "A greater than Laura is here."

The story of Mill's platonic affection for Mrs Taylor is too well known to need elucidation in this place. According to Professor Bain, their mutual acquaintance was formed through Fox, to whom Mrs Taylor, knowing or divining a fellow-sufferer, had disclosed the uncongeniality of her wedded estate, from her husband's want, not of feeling, but of culture. In thus gaining a friend for Mrs Taylor, he gained an ally for himself in Mill, whose labours were in every sense labours of love. Mercenary motives were the last that could be attributed to any contributor. "One of the pleasantest results of more extended success," said Fox, addressing his readers, "would be the consequent ability to put them on the same footing as the contributors to other periodicals," and he announced

his intention of placing all surplus profits, after reasonable allowance for such capital and editorial labour, at their disposal. But it must be feared that there never were any surplus profits ; though we learn from Fox himself that up to the end of 1833 at least there was no deficit. The great misfortune attending the relaxed condition of the sinews of war was that this prevented his enlisting contributors like Carlyle, who could not afford *travailler pour le Roi de Prusse*.

INDIA HOUSE,
April 3rd, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am sorry that you should think of apologising for a proposal by which I ought to be, and am very much flattered. There was no brusquerie on your side to be apologised for, but much dullness and incapacity of speaking intelligibly on mine : as is usual when I am taken unexpectedly and have anything to say on the spur of the moment. I learn every day by fresh instances that only when I have a pen in my hand can I make language and manner the true image of my thoughts. This is not only a fault in itself, but an index to other faults.

What I would say now, and would have said at the moment, but for my habitual unreadiness, is, that nothing would be more agreeable to me than to be allowed to insert in *The Monthly Repository* anything I might write which might be so fortunate as to be deemed fit for it ; but that I would avoid, as I always do, any literary engagement, wishing to write nothing for its own sake, but always because I am led to write it by the course of my habitual pursuits, and in execution of the general purposes of my life. Most persons, if I were to say this to them, would set me down as a perfect monster of affectation and self-conceit ; yet it is only putting into words what all persons ought at all times to have in their minds, as the guiding principle of their conduct. If it were my vocation, as it is probably yours, to instruct the general public, by preaching, public speaking and popular writing, I should devote myself to it, and there is scarcely any person with whom I should be so proud to cooperate as with yourself. But this is not what I am fittest for ;

nor do I find that time renders me fitter for it, but rather the contrary.

Times and circumstances may come in which I should probably think it my duty, however unfit, to buckle to the task, and make it, for the time, the principle of my life. But at present many things, far less conspicuously useful, but yet not unworthy that some one should make them his chief object of intellectual pursuit, must continue to hold the first place in my thoughts. And no one can do anything well, in this earthly pilgrimage of ours, in doing which he steps out of his way and delays his journey.

I will not therefore, make any promise, nor should I feel justified in leading you to reckon upon my offering anything to *The Monthly Repository*. But what I do not *undertake*, it by no means follows that I shall not *do*, and I was even thinking at the very time when your note reached me, of writing something which might possibly suit the design of the *Repository*. At all events, whenever I do write anything of the kind, I can find no mode of disposing of it that would be more pleasing to me than by giving it to the world under your auspices.

With many thanks for the extremely delicate and flattering tenour of your note. Believe me, most truly yours,

J. S. MILL.

The result of this carefully guarded promise of help, the offer of the "something that might possibly suit the design" of the periodical, appears in the September Number (1832): an essay "On Genius," with the signature which Mill at first adopted in *The Monthly Repository*, of "Antiquus"; but afterwards discarded for "A."

About the same time, when Mill's first article appeared in the *Repository*, he was writing to Fox on another subject in which he was passionately interested:—

INDIA HOUSE,
18 October, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,—My friend André Marchais, who pays me the compliment of making me the depository and instrument of the plans he forms for bringing about a good understanding be-

tween the patriotic party in France and the best of the English Radicals, has suggested something which appears to me highly important, and to which, if you think well of it, you have it in your power to be mainly instrumental.

You are aware of the virulent and increasing persecution which Louis Philippe keeps up against the Liberal press, in so much that the *Tribune* had been prosecuted between sixty and seventy times. Out of the first sixty prosecutions, resulted even against this violent paper only five verdicts : but though the prosecutors succeed only in one case out of twelve, the Court imposes such heavy fines that the Liberal press cannot long exist under such oppression, and the editors are almost always in prison. An association has therefore been formed at Paris, of which my excellent friend Marchais is the secretary, for the purpose generally of promoting the liberty of the press, and specially of raising subscriptions to pay the fines. You will find the prospectus of the Association in the third page of the enclosed *Courrier Français*.

Now those among the French patriots who know enough of the English radicals to desire their co-operation and sympathy are anxious to obtain subscribers in England for this association, and above all they wish that the Political Unions should bear some public testimony of sympathy and fraternity on this important occasion. No one can do more than you can to bring both these things about, and no one can judge more soundly what would be the best mode of doing it.

The more you see and converse with French people, the more importance you will attach to things of this kind. Every such mark of sympathy produces a great momentary effect, but they require to be again and again repeated ; for so few Frenchmen ever come here, that they do not learn, except from such public occurrences, that the English people, all but the Tories——

The conclusion of the letter is lost, but the gist of it may be easily supplied. It is not likely that anything came of the proposal. The Reform Bill having been carried, the Political Unions were generally held to have accomplished their work, and were losing their influence as factors in English politics.

In the early part of the next year, an indisposition for work seems to have possessed Mill. He writes under date of 19th May :—

DEAR MR FOX,—If there are any rumours that I was writing anything for *The Monthly Repository* of this month, I am sorry I cannot confirm them. I have abundance of vague intentions of writing for you but I have been very idle of late, and in fact never have been in a state more unfit for work ; from various causes, the chief of which is, I think, a growing want of interest in all the subjects which I understand, a growing sense of incapacity *ever* to have real knowledge of, or insight into the subjects in which alone I shall ever again feel a strong interest. . . . I feel so unequal to any of the higher moral and æsthetic subjects that because I would rather write something than nothing, I have had thoughts of offering you a few pages on a stupid book lately published by a man named Alison, pretending to be a history of the French Revolution. I am sick of that subject, but I could write something on it which perhaps would be of more use to *The Monthly Repository* than something better would be. . . .”¹

Referring to a charming description by Fox of a May Day spent in country scenes (entitled “Local Logic”) and to enthusiastic talks about the beauty of the place referred to, Mill continues :—

I *did* know the neighbourhood of Limpsfield, part of it, at least, in my childhood, and have walked in it and about it since, but am not familiar with it. I do not know the particular walk you allude to, though your description enables me to conceive it almost as if I knew it. I mean to renew my acquaintance with Limpsfield, cultivate and perfect it. That seems to me the only place on earth where it is possible to be happy—although it is you who have been there and not I—Should I say although ? and not rather because ? Does the Political Cyclopædic plan go on swimmingly ? Where in heaven and earth are you to find writers ? It is very easy to find people who can write ill, but very difficult to collect together even one

¹ Republished in vol. iii. of *Mill's Essays*.

or two who can write well, especially when the purpose is didactic not controversial. Ever yours,
J. S. MILL.

Another letter, undated, but of March 1833, shows pleasantly the cordial, even affectionate relations in which Mill stood towards Fox :—

You seem to me to overpraise Leigh Hunt. I say *you*, that is, I assume that you are the writer, partly for that reason. I think you often overpraise, and the cause is the keen sense of enjoyment which all things give you, that have anything of good and beautiful in them. I have fallen under the same accusation, but for an opposite reason—the *best* gave me so little enjoyment compared with what it should give, that I could not afford *not* to like even things which were very imperfect indeed.

The criticism on Alison's book "pretending to be a history of the French Revolution" appeared in due course (in July)—and was followed in September by one on Bulwer's *England and the English* under the heading of "Characteristics of English Aristocracy," which the writer opines would have been a more appropriate title for Mr Bulwer's book than the one he has chosen.

In its tendency, though not so much in its lore or opinions, this book is one of the most democratical which have been lately published. The author perceives how deep the spirit of aristocracy has struck its roots in English society, and his book is a continual illustration of its pervading and blighting influence.

In July 1833 an article in *The Edinburgh Review* on the house and window tax led Fox to call upon Mill for a reply :—

INDIA HOUSE,
July 4, 1833.

MY DEAR MR FOX,— . . . I write to say how happy I shall be to bear my testimony to the cause by maintaining it on *The Monthly Repository* in the manner you propose against the threatened attack. Of all propositions which could have

been made to me for writing anything either in *The Monthly Repository*, or elsewhere, that is what I should like best, because it is the subject I am most interested in, and to be treated in the manner in which I think myself most equal to treating it. I have always done more justice to a subject when I have treated it controversially than when I have attempted systematic exposition. I should not do for the pulpit, for I am always cold when I "have all the palaver to myself," and besides I always find most to say when I do not feel under an obligation to say all that can be said.

Pray let me know when I am to begin ; that is, let me have the paper I am to reply to, as early as may be."

Mill's article appeared in August. On 7th September Mill writes again from the India House about contributions to *The Monthly Repository*: "I am ashamed to say I can give no hope that 'Blakey' will be ready on Monday though I think part of him will be." Nevertheless, the article referred to, a most merciless onslaught upon Blakey's *History of Moral Science*, appeared in October.

This short review of an unimportant book is of much significance in Mill's intellectual history, for it reveals him as maintaining exactly the same thesis as he more than thirty years afterwards supported in the famous controversy with Mansel, which gained him the benediction of Maurice and Thirlwall. Blakey had maintained, or was understood by Mill to have maintained, that "Virtue is constituted by the will of God":—

If we believe this, we believe that God does not declare what is good, and command us to do it, but that God actually makes it good. . . . We have expended more words than were perhaps necessary upon so preposterous a doctrine. Our excuse must be the infinitely mischievous tendency of a theory of moral duty according to which God is to be obeyed, not because God is good, nor because it is good to obey him, but from some motive or principle which might have dictated equally implicit obedience to the powers of darkness. Such a philosophy, in proportion as it is realised in men's lives and characters, must

extirpate from their minds all reverence, all admiration, and all conscience, and leave them only the abject feelings of a slave.

This is precisely what Mill was afterwards to say to Mansel, and not with more decision or force. The letter continues :

I have nearly made up my mind to transfer to you the paper on Poetry which I thought of putting at the head of a review of Tennyson somewhere. I think I could make a better review of Tennyson, and with the same ideas too, in another way. If you like the idea and if you see her [Mrs Taylor] before Monday, will you mention it to her? You know it is hers, and if she approves, it shall be yours.

She did approve, and it appeared in the *Repository* under the title of "Two kinds of Poetry." It was reprinted in Mill's *Dissertations and Discussions* as "The Theory of Poetry." By calling it "hers" Mill is not to be understood as conceding her the actual authorship, for the little reviews she frequently contributed to the *Repository*, though admirable for sense and insight, are far from attaining the same level of style. But it was unquestionably inspired by her. Its best passage, the memorable contrast of Shelley and Wordsworth, would, ere Mill's acquaintance with her, hardly have occurred to him. It might not have been entirely outside his sphere, for he tells us that the abstracts of some of Plato's dialogues, contributed to the *Repository* in 1834 and 1835, had been prepared four years previously. The dialogues analysed are the "Protagoras," "Phædrus," and "Gorgias," with the "Apologia." "I afterwards," he says, "on various occasions found them to have been read, and their authorship known, by more people than were aware of anything else which I had written up to that time." They are, indeed, so lively and informing that they would well bear reprinting now, even after the elaborate introductions of Jowett.

Besides Mill, the *Repository* boasted among its contributors one other star of the first magnitude, but its celebrity in connection with Browning depends less upon his scanty contributions than upon its own distinction as the herald of a great and, but for it, in that day, an entirely neglected genius. Fox has thus inscribed his own name with honour on the roll of English critics, yet it may be doubted whether this honour would have been his but for Eliza and Sarah Flower. Though his temperament was highly poetical, his taste was formed on obsolete models, and the entrance of new light was gradual and difficult. Of this there is an amazing proof in a letter to Bowring 1830. Bowring had requested a contribution to the *Westminster*. Fox replies :—

I suppose you would not like me to do Shelley, else there is now an opportunity. Hunt has published *The Beauties of Shelley*. Stuff! the only beauty he ever had was his wife.

The testimony to Mary Shelley's attractions is acceptable at any rate. But if Fox could not appreciate Shelley, Eliza and Sarah Flower could, and when the poem of his young disciple and their young *protégé* came up for review, it can scarcely be doubted that Fox's duty was promptly set plainly before him. Browning was not unknown to him. About 1824 the "golden-curled young poet," not yet in his teens, had made the acquaintance of the Misses Flower through mutual friends, a family named Sturtevant : and Eliza, who must at that time have seemed the incarnation of a poet's dreams, and who appealed to the musician as well as to the poet in him, inspired him with an innocent boyish passion which probably found more or less expression in his *Incondita*. This collection of lyrics never, indeed, got into print, but a manuscript copy made by Eliza Flower came into the possession of Mrs Bridell Fox, by whom it was in 1866 restored at his earnest solicitation to Browning, who destroyed it. Had he preserved it and suppressed

some of his later productions the exchange might not have been disadvantageous to his reputation. Fox had read *Incondita*, and recognised its promise, all the more easily perhaps because the style was mainly Byronic. He would not, therefore, be surprised at receiving, early in 1831, the letter from Browning printed by Mrs Sutherland Orr (p. 55), enclosing a copy of the as yet unpublished *Pauline*, with a shy hint that a review in the *Westminster* would be acceptable, Browning, whose acquaintance with the Flowers had been dormant for a time, having apparently as yet not heard of the *Repository*. Under the gentle compulsion of the Flowers Fox fairly put his mind to the poems and was singularly successful in bringing sunshine into the shady place. "There are," he delicately remarks, "a few passages rather obscure." But the shrewd and probably not baseless suspicion that *Pauline* stood for Eliza would cover the multitude of sins. To whom else should the boy poet have confessed?

Othello needed not Desdemona to listen to his tale of disastrous chances; they were only external perils, repaid by elevated station; but the mind that has gone through more than his vicissitudes, been in deeper dangers, and deadlier struggles, even when it rests at last in far higher repose and dignity, yearns for some one who will "seriously incline" to listen to "the strange eventful history," one who will sympathise and soothe, who will receive the confession and grant the absolution of heaven, its best earthly ratification, that of a pure and loving heart. The poem is addressed to *Pauline*; with her it begins and ends; and her presence is felt throughout as that of a second conscience, wounded by evil, but never stern, and incorporate in a form of beauty which blends and softens the strong contrasts of different portions of the poem, so that all might be murmured by the breath of affection.

Fox evinced his faith in his author by submitting him to the test of copious extract, and his selections are made

with much discrimination. They include the word-picture of Andromeda :—

So beautiful

With her dark eyes, earnest and still, and hair
 Lifted and spread by the salt sweeping breeze ;
 And one red beam, all the storm leaves in heaven
 Resting upon her eyes and hair, such hair !¹
 As she awaits the snake on the wet beach
 By the dark rock, and the white wave just breaking
 At her feet ; quite naked and alone.

The impassioned apostrophe to Shelley as the “Sun-treader” is also quoted ; and the remark that “the common eye scarcely yet discerns among the laurel-crowned the form of Shelley” is perhaps intended as a palinode on the critic’s part, as well as a hint to the young author not to expect immediate popularity. Browning’s affinity to Shelley at this early stage of his poetical growth was at all events very clear to Fox. He wrote a few months later the essay so extolled by Mill—his “Local Logic,” in the description of a woodland picnic in connection with Caroline Southwood Smith’s Pestalozzian school :—

Shelley and Tennyson are the best books for this place. They sort well with the richness, in every sense ; with the warm mists, and the rustling of the woods, and the ceaseless melody of sound. They are natives of this soil ; literally so ; and if planted would grow as surely as a crowbar in Kentucky sprouts tenpenny nails. *Probatum est.* Last autumn L[izzie Flower] dropped a poem of Shelley’s down there in the wood, among the thick, damp, rotting leaves, and this spring someone found a delicate exotic looking plant growing wild on the very spot, with “Pauline” hanging from its slender stalk. Unripe fruit it may be, but of a pleasant flavour and promise, and a mellower produce, it may be hoped, will follow.

Fox’s review of *Paracelsus*, and the general relations of Browning to Fox’s circle, will be more conveniently

¹ As originally published, and as printed in the *Repository*, “face and hair.”

considered at a later period, but it must be noticed here that Fox strove to secure *Pauline* a wider public through the medium of Stuart Mill, whose admiration for the poem was evidently neither so ardent nor so spontaneous as believed by Mr Gosse.¹ Probably his Egeria did not see eye to eye with his Mentor.

I have written nothing lately [he writes to Fox on 19th May] but a short article on *that* "Pauline," which will not, I believe, be too long for *The Examiner*, and if so will probably appear there. That I have written chiefly because you wished it.

But *The Examiner* would have none of it, and the review, altered and enlarged for *Tait*, was shut out by the prior appearance in that magazine of a few words of the most contemptuous character.² Mill writes yet again to Fox at the end of June:—

I send "Pauline," having done all I could, which was to annotate copiously in the margin and sum up on the fly-leaf. On the whole the observations are not flattering to the author—perhaps too strong in the expression to be shown him.

It would appear, however, that the book was shown to Browning and retained by him until appropriated by Forster, with whose library it came to the South Kensington Museum.

It was Fox's distinction to acclaim both the great poets who arose in the reign of William IV.—less decisively, indeed in the case of Tennyson than in that of Browning—for his testimony was delayed until the appearance of Tennyson's second volume. But he might have spoken sooner. "We felt certain of Tennyson," he writes in his review of *Pauline* before he saw the book, "by a few verses

¹ *Personalia*, p. 28.

² It is just to record that *The Athenæum* was an exception to the general hostility or indifference. The reviewer, Allan Cunningham, declares that the faults of *Pauline* were to its beauty as "a grain of sand to a cup of pure water."

which had straggled into a newspaper." In the review itself he tells how in the autumn of 1830, amid the agitation produced by the revolution in France :

It was our blessed hap to escape for a while from the feverish and tumultuous scenes, with a little book which no flourish of newspaper trumpets had announced, and in whose train no reviewers had waved their banners, but which made us feel that a new poet had arisen in the land, and that there was hope for man in powers and principles and enjoyments which flows a deep and everlasting under-current, beneath the stony surface of political changes and conflicts. We profess no indifference to the whirlwind, the earthquake, and the fire, but that still small voice sank profoundly into our hearts, breathing in calmer and holier hope.

The review itself cannot be considered equal to that of the apparently less reviewable *Pauline*. It is less felicitous in quotation, and selects for praise many lines subsequently altered or cancelled by the poet's maturer judgment. But it is a refreshing contrast to that atrocious sin against light, Lockhart's review in the *Quarterly* ; and, if less polished than Arthur Hallam's, is exempt from the suspicion of *camaraderie*.

Fox was far from sparing himself, and his multiplied activity upon the *Repository* must have been of great service in giving him a grasp of affairs and qualifying him for the part he was to perform in political life. The preacher had become a publicist. The number was frequently prefaced by some article on a pressing topic of the day from his pen, and his editorial office required him to notice a host of new publications, some of which, such as *Wakefield on the Punishment of Death*, served as texts for the pithy enunciation of deeply-felt ideas of his own. The keynote of his political utterances is an intense sympathy for the working classes and a consuming zeal for their elevation, especially by an enlarged franchise and the education which none more closely perceived would be

essential to the right use of freedom. The working classes would never have had a more judicious friend, had Fox been able to moderate a hostility to the higher orders of society only excusable as an effect of the bitterness engendered by their long and unjust monopoly of political power. Yet, with all the writer's vigour, it is clear that the inspiring spirit is rather that of a poet than of a politician. Political is with him but the pathway to social reform. He writes to Eliza Flower in a letter of 15th December 1834 :—

To-morrow morning we shall probably have the settlement of the new administration, and perhaps by evening the dissolution of Parliament. I can then begin upon my first article, which I want to make a philosophical and poetical political article on the true spirit of Reform, as a real spirit in the soul of man, and not an affair of business or party.

No wonder that a man who wrought in this spirit afterwards found the Anti-Corn Law League too narrow for him, entirely as he sympathised with its object. He was equally impatient of contracted views on subjects which touched him more nearly. He was a pioneer of female suffrage, but after pointing out what he regarded as the anomaly that woman might sit upon the throne, but not vote at an election, he adds, "We do not attach any particular importance to the continuance or cessation of this apparent absurdity. It is only one form of a far deeper and more extensive social anomaly."

Man has crippled female intellect, and thereby enfeebled his own. In training a dependent, he has lost a companion. As aristocracy had legislated for him, so has he for woman—both the worse for success in what they deemed their peculiar interest. In claiming science, politics, philosophy, and all the higher regions of thought for himself, and warning off intrusion by placarding them with the word *unfeminine*, he has deprived himself of the best sympathy, the most efficient aid, the

mightiest stimulus, and the noblest reward of his own most honourable toils.

It is sufficiently clear of whom Fox was thinking. Eliza Flower copied all his articles, and her influence is no doubt to be especially traced in such as the above, and in those on literary and musical subjects. An account of the Norwich musical festival of 1833 is a good example of the playfulness which is rarely long absent from Fox's most serious moods :—

Good people of Norwich, make your Festivals cheaper, hold them every year, cherish your chorus-singers, and never care whether the music be blue and white, or orange and purple. Your gentry have abominably demoralised your community for all political purposes ; you have to regain a character in the country, for everywhere they call you all sorts of rascally names ; and you cannot do better than carry on, as you have already commenced, a great Musical Reform for the good of the nation at large. It is quite a godsend for you, as good a thing as Greece was for Lord Byron, when *Don Juan* began to pall. You cannot be more honourably or usefully patriotic ; it will be better than returning a milk-and-water brace of blues at the next election ; for that will be a great wickedness if done for money, and a great folly if done for nothing.

About this time, Mr Pickwick, proceeding to the Eatanswill election, “booked by the Norwich coach.”

Fox's writing in general attains so high a level of excellence that one almost wonders that it has not proved more enduring. This is partly to be explained by the degree to which it is employed upon subjects of merely temporary interest, but a deeper reason is that it was precisely such subjects that Fox was best qualified to treat. “To popularise among the many, the more immediately practical results of the thoughts and experience of the pen,” wrote Mill in his essay on “*Junius Redivivus*,” is the great intellectual business of our time.” In this Fox

was admirable, and he could contribute from his own stores also. But he was not a profound thinker, or gifted with a genius for discovery. A page of Carlyle, or Emerson, or James Martineau is sure to yield something which either drops baffled from the mind it would penetrate, or surprises as with a sudden illumination. Fox is always intelligible, generally delightful and profitable, but he rarely breaks up the fountains of the great deeps within the soul. He is a Preacher, not a Prophet, a poet nevertheless ; and his productions attain the standard of genius in proportion to their glow of poetic rapture. A fine instance is the dithyrambic on " Marielli " (Mary Kingston's) setting of " Rule Britannia," a gorgeous vision of Britain's ascent " from out the azure main," terminating, however, to the scandal of the military and naval professions, with Britannia's renunciation of her helmet for a wreath, and the metamorphosis of her trident into a cornucopia. Fox's demeanour at the time of the Crimea was, however, to show that the spirit of the Volunteers of 1803 was not so extinct in him as he thought. Other themes which called forth his best powers were protests against what he deemed social injustices, and pleas for those, especially women, who suffered from them. His most remarkable effort of this description was *The Victim*, the story of Mehetabel Wesley of which Mill wrote to him :—

That article on Mehetabel Wesley is very painful—as it ought to be—but beautiful and valuable beyond anything that I have read either in *The Monthly Repository* or elsewhere for many, many months.

Mehetabel, John Wesley's unhappy sister, was a modern Jephthah's daughter, whose story might seem incredible if it did not come on the authority of her own family. Her father prevented her marriage with the man to whom she had given her heart. She vowed in distraction that she would wed the first man who asked

her. The Rector of Epworth approved himself a second Jephthah, and when a low, uneducated person appeared as a suitor, Mehetabel was actually compelled to marry him, with the assent, as would seem, of all the family except one sister. She died after twenty-five years of suffering, leaving behind her one poem of such beauty as alone would justify Fox's character of her as

A beautifully organised creature, endowed with that peculiarity of the nervous system which is the physical temperament of poetry ; which quickens alike the organs of sense and the apparatus of thought ; which makes perception clear, imagination vivid, and emotion intense ; and to which earth is either heaven or hell as external circumstance harmonises or jars with the internal constitution.

It is probable that Fox was mainly relieved of the business cares connected with the *Repository* by his brother Charles who had become the publisher upon the transfer of the copyright. His contributions and editorial correspondence must nevertheless have occupied much time, and when it is remembered that he was then at the zenith of his fame as a preacher, and active as an orator and organiser in the Reform agitation, liable moreover to frequent interruptions from illness and the discomforts of an unhappy home, it seems marvellous how he should have successfully met such incessant drafts upon strength and spirit. Nor would he, but for a devotion inspired by the truest affection.

During the first year of Fox's proprietorship, he obtained valuable aid from Harriet Martineau, a warm friend who would assuredly have continued an extensive contributor but for the simultaneous publication of her *Illustrations of Political Economy*. She had been, as we have seen, a contributor to the *Repository* before it had become Fox's property : her writings for the new series characteristically commenced with an essay on the duty

of studying political economy, and a thoroughly didactic purpose animates the pretty tale of *Liese, or The Progress of Worship*, in which Luther and his convent spouse are introduced. Liese [Lizzie] is clearly Eliza Flower, and her secretarial labours for Fox are plainly alluded to. Miss Martineau's opinions were much modified in later life, but she always continued to advance along the lines upon which she had begun. Not so her illustrious brother, who in the days of the *Repository* was beginning to emancipate himself from the necessarian scheme of thought in which he had been educated, and which he was yet far from having relinquished. His essay on Priestley, memorable as his first important production, was upon its republication in 1852 considerably modified by him, and the reader who would know his philosophical views in 1833 must recur to the *Repository*. Of the essay on Bentham's *Deontology* (1834, not reprinted, and the authorship of which has been wrongly contested) Professor Upton says:—

The main interest of this elaborate review of Bentham's work lies in the subtlety of thought and brilliancy of expression which the writer displays in endeavouring to reconcile a utilitarian theory of morals with the noble ethical ideas and sentiments which evidently pervaded and actuated his own mind.

He had to learn that they were not reconcilable. The review is further remarkable for an indignant protest against Bentham's "defamation" of Socrates and Plato.

Two of the most vigorous contributors to the *Repository* might fairly be described as amateurs—men of ideas whose desire to place their opinions before the world rendered them indifferent to other recompense. Such disinterestedness is not necessarily associated with talent, and affords, indeed, in the opinion of no less weighty an authority than Dr Johnson, a sure indication of the reverse. William Bridges Adams, the "Junius Redivivus" of the *Repository*,

and Charles Reece Pemberton, its "Pel Verjuice," could not have been characterised as fools, though some may have deemed them firebrands. "Junius Redivivus on Coroners," wrote Crabb Robinson, "is absolutely outrageous." In fact William Bridges Adams, though he afterwards became the husband of the ethereal Sarah Flower, does not appear to have been largely endowed with "sweet reasonableness." Of his demeanour in private life, indeed, little is known ; but his public utterances are aggressive and acrimonious ; inspired nevertheless with such real vigour as almost to justify the audacious assumption of so great a name. Adams, a widower, had been the son-in-law of Francis Place, the purest incarnation of radicalism of the utilitarian and unimaginative type ; but Adams' mind, though steeped in virulent class-hatred, was open to the influences of beauty and taste. The internal evidence of his writings shows that he had travelled in South America, and stored his mind with impressions of natural beauty. The paper entitled "Beauty" in the *Repository* for 1833, describing a voyage past Tierra del Fuego, is a striking piece of prose-poetry. He was also a poet in verse, though a crude and bad one ; and blended with his onslaught on "bishops, lawyers, peers and spies" really valuable disquisitions upon the condition of the fine arts at the time : and on theatrical reform, which begins by asserting that genius for acting is more widely different than is generally believed and ends with an estimate of the qualifications of an actor which might well affect the aspirant as Imlac's discourse on poetry affected Rasselas. After the discontinuance of the *Repository*, Adams ceased to write, and established large railway carriage works at Bow, which Carlyle honoured with a visit, esteeming him as a captain of industry, and probably though he did not say so, as one "consuming his own smoke." For the remainder of his life Adams certainly appears to have refrained from the emission of fire either. His epoch of

volcanic activity had been long enough and violent enough to do the *Repository* considerable harm, especially by his unpopular views on the subject of marriage. These were, indeed, no other than Milton's : but the time was not ripe for them, and even had it been otherwise Fox would have done well to have exercised a severer censorship over his contributors and himself in the discussion of a subject so delicate, in which it is so difficult to reconcile the precepts of the higher law with the stability of social institutions. His own intimate concern in the question should have taught him self-distrust and reserve in the expression of opinion : yet it must be admitted that reforms would seldom be affected if their advocacy were confined to the disinterested. He did not want for a monitor : the following letter from John James Tayler is an excellent statement alike of the sympathies and the scruples of a good and wise man :—

MANCHESTER,

June 12, 1833.

I was fearful, my dear Sir, lest my long silence should have led you to suppose I was one of your deserters, in the great division of feeling in the Unitarian body. That I am not so, the reasons which I have just given for my delay in writing to you will sufficiently explain. I approve of the spirit of *The Monthly Repository*, because I see in it a frank and open encouragement to freedom of discussion, and because I am persuaded the conductor of it desires above every other object the happiness and virtue of the whole human race, and is more desirous to serve the cause of truth than the interests of a sect. These are the sympathies which I have with *The Monthly Repository*, as at present conducted; and if my dissent from some of the doctrines which have been advocated in its pages were stronger than it is, I should still say, that principles so enlightened and comprehensive ought to be supported. I will be perfectly frank with you, my dear Sir.—I am not yet convinced of the justness of your views—or I should rather say, as far as I have yet thought on the subject I am decidedly opposed to your views on the

action of the nuptial tie. The evils, which you propose to remove are confessedly great ; and I am deeply persuaded of the benevolence of spirit, with which you seek their removal ; but it appears to me, in the vague manner in which the doctrine has hitherto been inculcated in the pages of *The Monthly Repository*, that the remedies proposed would only lead to greater evils—that what constitutes the *sanctity* of the moral tie—the feeling that husband and wife have reciprocal duties to perform towards each other—must bear and forbear—and draw moral discipline from the trials which grow out of each other's infirmities—that all this would be weakened by the proposed relaxation of the contract—that children would often be wretchedly provided for—and that a still greater licentiousness would mark the intercourse of the sexes—both from the circumstance of a man's being able to represent to a woman that any connection was in fact a marriage, and from the prospect before both of being able ultimately to dissolve the marriage, if they found it more agreeable to do so. These are my first impressions ; I confess I have not thought deeply on the subject. I rejoice the discussion has begun, because I think it a very important one, and I wish to gain more clear and definite ideas on the most important of all the institutions of civilised society. It is a subject, which it seems to me should be treated both earnestly and copiously. What I could not but regret in one or two articles in *The Monthly Repository* was the slightness and brevity of manner, in which so grave a subject was handled. Yours, my dear Sir, very sincerely,

J. J. TAYLER.

The portrait of Charles Reece Pemberton prefixed to his literary remains delineates something intermediate between Garibaldi and a troubadour, and fairly represents a loyal, simple and disinterested character, dominated by enthusiastic impulse. Born in Wales in 1790, brought up as a brassfounder at Birmingham, he fled from an unsympathetic uncle to fall into the hands of a pressgang, served on several ships of war, and went through most of the adventures recorded in his autobiographic novel, *Pel [Peregrine] Verjuice*. By some unexplained vicissitude

of fortune he became a favourite actor and prosperous manager in the West Indies, but an unhappy marriage drove him back to England, where his acting delighted Talfourd, but met with small appreciation from the public. As a lecturer and reciter he succeeded better. "I have never heard one," testifies Mr Holyoake, "who had the animation, the inspiration, and the spontaneous variety that he had." He was doing well when consumption drove him to Egypt, whence he returned to die in Birmingham on 3rd March 1840. His literary remains were published by John Fowler, of Sheffield, with a warm appreciation by Fox, rather however of the man than of the volume. They have, in fact, little merit except for *Pel Verjuice*, an artless but riveting narrative in the manner of Trelawny's *Adventures of a Younger Son*. It had originally appeared in the *Repository*, to which he was led to offer it by his admiration for Mehetabel Wesley "becoming immediately," says Fox, "a gratuitous and a generous contributor." A memorial poem by Ebenezer Elliott was printed along with the Remains, though it had failed to satisfy the author. "How is it," he says, writing to Eliza Flower, "that I cannot write a line worthy of Pemberton? It shall not be long before I join his lovely name with some scene of our happy wanderings."

One of the glories of the *Repository* was the series of papers on Goethe in 1832-1833, which "flattered" the author, Henry Crabb Robinson, "with the notion that I was not altogether useless." The papers were not of extraordinary brilliancy, but memorable as the first systematic introduction of Goethe to England. Carlyle had translated *Wilhelm Meister*, but had treated the author rather prophetically than pragmatically: William Taylor of Norwich had discerned something of him in his youth, but lost sight of him in middle life: Coleridge's good intention of translating *Faust* had gone the way of most of his intentions. *The Edinburgh Review*, misled by an

execrable translation of *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, had covered Goethe with silly ridicule. It did not then seem absurd to speak of Goethe and Kotzebue in the same breath. Goethe's death induced Fox to approach Robinson with the proposal that he should reveal the poet to the readers of the *Repository*. Subject and writer were felicitously chosen. Goethe was personally known to Robinson, and equally admired by him as man and author. He set to work vigorously, and produced a serviceable abstract of Goethe's writings. A review of Sarah Austin's *Characteristics of Goethe* was afterwards added. It will be seen by the following excerpts that the relations of author and editor were not entirely without friction. Robinson was evidently nervous and fastidious :—

FLOWDEN BUILDINGS,
5 April, 1832.

I should have great pleasure indeed in writing about Goethe did I not feel most strongly that it is a task far above my strength, nevertheless I will send you something that without pretending to be a *critical* article may serve to gratify the curiosity of your readers. The appreciation of Goethe's poetical and philosophical character will be a problem on which the first spirits of the two or three next generations will delight to exercise themselves. It would be presumptuous in any living Englishman (except perhaps Coleridge) to attempt such a work. And Coleridge has not the requisite love. Carlyle would perhaps succeed better than any other. Our friend William Taylor will, I hope, abstain from the attempt.

[Undated.]

I send you an ample portion for the next number, but it is possible that I may send you some five or six more slips merely to finish the eleventh volume. The twelfth volume contains Faust. I may find it prudent to dismiss Faust with a line or two, but if I find after studying it that I can say anything tolerable I may make it the matter of an article alone. Goethe condensed all his poetry and all his philosophy in this *unique*

work. There is hardly a topic of religion or philosophy not treated ; but in *such a way* ! the devil being the hero. His style is a sort of sublime burlesque, quite inimitable und untranslatable. So that after all I may not have the courage to do more than condense a characteristic of it in a few lines.

PLOWDEN BUILDINGS,

16 June, 1832.

The poem upon which you have passed sentence of condemnation was admired by Mrs Barbauld (or rather I should say, the original was admired by her)—you yourself say that you like it. I can imagine but one reason why it should be left out, and that is, that the inserting it will injure the Magazine with your readers. If so, and you are a much better judge on that point than I can be, you do quite right in rejecting it. But then you have done wrong in asking me to furnish, and I should do wrong in a greater degree by continuing what must, I think, be equally unpleasant. No man who cannot relish a poetical composition because it is written in a form of verse that he knows not how to read, being quite new, and which at first may very well appear to be no verse at all, ought to read foreign literature at all. There is a great difference between reading for pleasure, and reading in order to know what kind a foreign work is ; and this latter kind of translation I have thought myself capable of producing.

I hope you will oblige me by granting a pardon to the condemned article. I can put but one construction on your declining to print it, and that I have stated. A consciousness of that is quite enough to disable me from going on with my task, and this not from resentment or ill-temper but really from incapacity. It is the same with me in company—I talk willingly in society, and, if I am contradicted, can carry on an argument polemically with pleasure. But if I see a smile, or a sneer of contempt, or a person who I know does not respect me comes into the room, I am silenced at once.

16 July.

I hope you are not afraid of the Edinburgh Review. I have introduced a pretty sharp attack on it in defence of our friend William Taylor, on behalf of whom you will be glad to have a

kind word in *The Monthly Repository*, for he is a friend after all, though an odd one. I have also expressed my love of Mrs Barbauld, which will be agreeable to most of—nay, to all your readers. It is one of the pleasures of writing these things that one has so an opportunity of gratifying one's best feelings.

2 PLOWDEN BUILDINGS,
3rd October, 1832.

It would give me real concern to occasion injury to your publication by its containing what is not to your readers' taste. And I very much regret being drawn on to make the articles so much longer than I intended. The mistake I have fallen into is one too common in those who write to excite much surprise. I fear we have been both in error; you in not recollecting that the great mass of your readers care nothing about German literature; I in thinking myself capable of exciting curiosity by giving an account of the greatest author of his age, and absolutely new information to the English reader concerning his works. For such a summary of Goethe exists nowhere. Your politeness may induce you to reply:—"Such a summary may be good anywhere else—only it does not suit my readers." This is all true enough, and the only thing to be done is the getting out of the scrape as gently as we can. If you will refer back to my letters you will find you have mistaken what I said about the probable extent of the series if continued. And if you will favour me with a call, I will show you what remains to be done, and the copy I have lying by me. You will then do precisely what you think the interest of your publication requires, which ought to be your only consideration.

In September 1815 Fox had written of the brilliant Sarah Austin, then a Taylor of Norwich:—

Among the party was a Mr A[ustin], a young man preparing for the bar, of very strong and original mind. "Who is he?" said I afterwards to R[ichard] T[aylor]. "He is likely to be our brother-in-law." "Ah M[adg]e," thought I, "thou art a false prophet in predicting that the triumphs of Sally T. were at an end."

The shadow of the coming event was cast five years in advance ; it was not till 1820 that Sarah Taylor became Sarah Austin. Since then many things had happened and continued to happen until, in 1832, they acquired certainty that " the strong and original mind " was far too sensitive, not only for an advocate but even for a professorship of jurisprudence, drove Sarah Austin to literature for a livelihood and enriched Fox's portfolio with several specimens of her sparkling and animated correspondence :—

Nov. 3 (1832).

DEAR SIR,—I learn to my great surprise and mystification that you have announced me in the *Repository* of this month as the translator of Sarrans. I never even saw the book. I never mean to translate a French book, nor anything but German, and as translating is my profession, and I take more trouble in it than most people, it is very important to me not to have the little reputation I can acquire by hard labours destroyed by having careless and hurried translations imputed to me.

Will you be so kind as to take immediate steps to have it unsaid ? I have been announced in two or three journals, and truly, as being occupied in a book which requires my utmost attention. I feel it will produce a most unfavourable anticipation of that, if I am supposed to have been galloping through such a work as Sarrans.

Pray forgive the author-like importance I attach to my own trifles, and believe me very truly and respectfully yours,

S. AUSTIN.

You shall always know from me what I do translate.

The translation which Mrs Austin disclaims with such vivacity was one of Sarrans, *Lafayette, Louis Philippe, and the French Revolution of 1830*, reviewed by Mrs John Taylor in the *Repository* for November 1832. The correction desired by Mrs Austin was made in the next number, plus a puff preliminary of her translation of Falks' *Characteristics of Goethe*. Her next letter refers to her *Selections from the Old Testament* :—

Nov. 18, 1832.

I told you you should know from myself all my literary sins, and therefore I send herewith the *corpus delicti*.

As you confess that judgment is hanging over your head, I now fine you in your best puff, or rather as many as you think will profit my book, which, I beg you to take good notice, is mine: *i.e.*, I have reserved the copyright.

You who know a little of my Radical friends will understand that I have disgraced myself not a little in the eyes of some even of the best, by meddling with "such trash." On the other hand, I expect the Saints will accuse me of impious presumption for the same. For once, therefore, I hope you will be of the *juste milieu*, and tolerate both my piety and my impiety.

Please not to say that I am a Unitarian, because I am not at all sure that I am in any sense of the word understood here, and am rather inclined like some of my German friends to say, as they do in their letters, the Gods bless you, though after all they mean no such matter as a Trinity, nor any assignable number of states or conditions of Divinity. My book on Goethe will soon be out, and will, I have the vanity to think, puzzle everybody and please nobody, which is what he liked. I shall amerce you in another blast of your trumpet on that occasion, though I am more anxious for this, for reasons assigned, and because I am sure that you will succeed.

Most truly yours,

S. AUSTIN.

I really thank you for the compliments in your note about Sarrans, in spite of my indignation at being suspected of translating French.

May 3 [1832].

The accompanying *misch-masch* was concocted for *The New Monthly*—that is, I (at the request of a friend of Bulwers,) put upon paper a few of my own thoughts of the Prince [Puckler Muskau] which he curtailed, altered, and added to according to his own notions, and sent the results to Bulwer. Bulwer is, however, as I daresay you know, a fine gentlemen, and horribly afraid of the displeasure of Lords, and after keeping the article till the publication of the number sent word that he hadn't room for it.

The truth is (as Charles Buller told me he confessed to him) he wished to escape the subject, for, as he said naively enough, "You see it is very awkward for me, because I dine with these men."

How hardly shall a Dandy edit a Radical magazine ! "

The *misch-masch* did not appear ; it was probably better adapted to the meridian of *The New Monthly* than to that of *The Monthly Repository*.

Another Sarah, Sarah Flower Adams, was a less extensive contributor to the *Repository* than might have been expected, but wrote (1835) one tale of deep subjective interest, *The Actress*. The structure and diction are old-fashioned, and, were it not known to embody the authoress's own aspirations after theatrical success, it might be lightly passed by, but read with this clue it is seen to depict a living and intense experience. The lovely picture of wedded happiness, moreover, acquires fresh beauty when it is known to have been drawn immediately after the authoress's marriage. Sarah Adams also wrote some pretty poems for her sister's musical series in the *Repository*, "Songs of the Months," and contributed recollections of Coleridge and Lamb, especially interesting as exhibiting the pair in colloquy ; and a paper on the need for a National Gallery, remarkable less for itself than as an indication of the vast advance of public taste and public feeling during the then dawning Victorian Era. The end of the Victorian age has forgotten the beginning, and ignorance has become the parent of ingratitude. Great indeed has been the deliverance. In 1833 Sarah Flower Adams could describe the sight of "women artists working in safety without being insulted by the suspicious glances of the mischievous and ignorant" as "a pleasure peculiar to the Louvre."

Poetry claimed a considerable share of the *Repository* : which for a time might almost be described as the rallying point of the young writers by whom the impulse originally

received from Shelley was propagated throughout English literature. Four of Browning's five contributions appear in his collected works, but it was left to Mr Gosse to retrieve the first of all in point of date (August 1834), and print it in the *Personalia*. It is a sonnet, a metrical form rarely essayed by Browning.

Two other poets of mark represented the innovating school, R. H. Horne and Thomas Wade. Neither displayed himself to the best advantage. Horne's epic and dramatic genius required a wider arena than a monthly periodical could afford; and Wade's want of all instinct for form and deficiency in melody militated against his success in short pieces. Poets of manlier and more direct utterance were found in the singers of the people, Ebenezer Elliott and Robert Nicoll. Fox had hailed Elliott early in 1832, in a remarkable article on "The Poor, and their Poetry," when he knew nothing of the man except his book. "The author is said to be a working man named Elliott, somewhere in the north. On this point, posterity will be better informed than we are at the present moment." Acquaintance was soon formed, and the Corn Law Rhymer was invited to contribute to the *Repository*. He wrote on 9th January 1833:—

I have very little time for writing, and much less ability than you have had the kindness to imagine. I wrote the Corn Law Rhymes passionately, with an honest and useful purpose. This, I believe, is the whole secret of my supposed genius, but though I cannot write anything that will do credit to your pages, I hold you pledged to take what I may send you with consideration.

Profit! how can you expect any? There cannot be profit and bread for any in a fully peopled country at the same time.

Several of Elliott's poems appeared for the first time in the *Repository*. Fox, upon personal acquaintance, conceived a profound esteem for the author. Noticing his

death in a discourse delivered at Finsbury Chapel in 1849, he said :—

He was a man to welcome and to fraternise with, whether in the uproar of the hustings or in the devotion of the tabernacle ; whether in the crowded mart or in the country ramble ; a man who showed that the poet could yet be the patriot—that poetry was not too soft and squeamish a thing to be brought into contact with the rough and stern realities of existence ; but who, while denouncing oppression and wrong, and that in the sturdiest and most earnest manner, yet ever had a heart and an eye for all that is true, and beautiful, and good. Various instances might be adduced from his writings of the fact that religion especially thrives in the poetic temperament.

Another warm-hearted review from Fox's pen brought the *Repository* a valuable recruit in the person of Robert Nicoll, perhaps the best Scottish minstrel since Burns, who, according to his own testimony, but requited an obligation :—

6 CASTLE STREET, DUNDEE,
Jan. 5, 1836.

SIR,—In 1830, when I was in my sixteenth year, a fortunate chance sent to the village where I then resided on the borders of the Highlands of Perthshire a few stray numbers of *The Monthly Repository* which fell into my hands. Previous to that time I was an enthusiastic Radical, but from that moment my radicalism was of a new sort. It was no longer the natural indignation of a producing man at the system of castes which ground him to the earth, but it was something better ; it was the radicalism of knowledge instead of the radicalism of instinct. From that day to this I have been a constant reader and I may say devourer of your magazine, and when I found that the small volume which I had caused to be sent to you as a token of respect and love from one who had nothing else to bestow, I was indeed gratified, gratified that the man I most honoured on earth, the man who had withstood the enemies of God and man to the face and overcome them, saw in my efforts, however



SARAH FLOWER ADAMS
From a drawing by Miss Margaret Gillis

much unfinished and juvenile, something to prize and to commend, something fitted for forwarding the good work of human improvement.

An offer of contributions follows, and met with cordial response. Nicoll published several poems in the *Repository*, and an essay on Scottish Song. Could he have devoted himself entirely to literature he would have ranked high, but poverty compelled him to accept the editorship of a Leeds newspaper, and labour and political excitement soon destroyed him. Fox's sympathy for poetry was not exhibited merely in

Disentangling from the imping wings
Of our young poets their crustaceous slough :

he was ever ready to help a veteran like Leigh Hunt, to whom Mill, as we have seen, thought him too kind, or to encourage the study of an author of established fame. Charles Cowden Clarke writes, 8th February 1834, on occasion of a review by Fox of his *Riches of Chaucer* :—

I have seen the very kind and as handsome recommendation you have given of my editions of Chaucer ;—the more welcome because I trust to every word that is said in the article, seeing that I have long noted you for “ a fellow of exceeding honesty.” Your approval, therefore, has set me at ease upon an undertaking in which my heart many a time misgave me. I can say of myself that I was neither careless nor lukewarm in my calling, and had I possessed ten times the ability I have, all should have been exerted in the cause of that glorious old poet.

Had I seen that letter of Lamb's in Kamschatka and without his or Hazlitt's name, I would have sworn to the writer. If I can find it I will put one in my pocket which he sent to me after the Westminster Abbey musical performance, and call upon you in a few days. It is very like him, and very pithy, and will be all Hebrew Greek to everyone but those initiated in his very original and remarkable humour.

The letter to Hazlitt which would have been recognisable as Lamb's in Kamschatka is printed by Mr Lucas at p. 431 of his edition. The one contributed by Clarke also appears at p. 932 ; and is indeed a characteristic specimen of his mystifying playfulness :—

[*End of June, 1834.*]

We heard the Music in the Abbey at Winchmore Hill ! and the notes were incomparably softened by the distance. Novello's chromatics were distinctly audible. Clara was faulty in B flat. Otherwise she sang like an angel. The trombone, and Beethoven's waltzes, were the best. Who played the oboe ?

Fox's benevolence extended even to the " Revolutionary Epick " of Disraeli, then regarded as a promising, though anomalous, young Radical. Fox did not fall into the error of taking Disraeli for a charlatan. What though the epic was a failure ? Let him become a Member of Parliament, or the head of an armed insurrection somewhere abroad, or a missionary(!). Another remarkable review was that (February 1835) of Landor's *Examination of William Shakespeare*, " The one review without which," Crabb Robinson told the author, " the book would have fallen dead." The review was probably by R. H. Horne.

The finest poem contributed to the *Repository* came, as already mentioned, from a woman's hand, and so did the most interesting ; the interest of which, however, is less in the poem than in the writer. Mill's description of his wife as " an eminently poetic nature " has been regarded as a proof of the illusion she had cast upon him, but this anonymous scrap from her pen (*Repository* for 1832, p. 617) shows that he well knew what he was talking of. Artless and unpolished as the lines are, their fitful music and vague yearning are the very wail of the wind itself, and of the very essence of poetry :—

TO THE SUMMER WIND

Whence comest thou, sweet wind ?
Didst take thy phantom form
'Mid the depth of the forest trees ?
 Or spring, new-born
 Of the fragrant morn
'Mong the far-off Indian seas ?

Where speedest thou, sweet wind ?
Thou little heedest, I trow.—
Dost thou sigh for some glancing star ?
 Or cool the brow
 Of the dying now,
As they pass to their home afar ?

What mission is thine, O wind ?
Say for what thou yearnest—
That, like the wayward mind,
 Earth thou spurnest,
 Heavenward turnest,
And rest canst nowhere find ?

The year 1834 was perhaps the culminating epoch of the influence of the *Repository*. The events of that year to be hereafter related, which estranged from Fox a considerable part of his congregation, no doubt injured its circulation, but might have been surmounted but for the necessity imposed upon him of devoting his time to remunerative work. The *Repository* had ever been a labour of love, but the new obligations could only be met by the transference of his literary activity to the newspaper press—regrettable in so far as it obscured his individuality and narrowed his range of subject, but fortunate in as much as it extended his sphere of influence. His condition of discomfort probably accounts for his having merely “folded up” the most remarkable contribution ever offered him “for a serener time,” now happily arrived :—

LANGHAM PLACE,
January 21 [1836].

MR EDITOR,

SIR,—Having been informed by a few friends of much literary promotion, gentlemen in whose judgment I superlatively confide, that in the course of their miscellaneous readings they have had occasion to peruse some parts of The Monthly Expository, the whole extensive business of which you so ably conduct, and that they have seen certain drawings of newly invented bonnets therein, followed by many particularly pertinent remarks of your own making on the subject, I hereby beg to express upon your well informed mind the propriety and respectability of truth in all future accounts of the real inventor and proprietor of the bonnets aforesaid, concerning which I have already obtained the best legal advice that can be had. If those who attempt a fraud could always keep their own council, they might much oftener succeed than they do. But thank God, they are quite unable to do so, for with some people, however dangerous to their own purposes, nothing can stop the human tongue. It is not my intention to dwell any longer and philosophicalise on this subject, of the merits of which I make no doubt you are already in possession, which is nine points both of law and knowledge, needing nothing but the tythe I am about to communicate. I know all about the misguided effort of those French pictures of sin in Regent Street, and also of the self-assumed Mrs Smith, who has so notoriously infested you. For many young ladies work for me, and are *paid* by me, who have also worked for other people, and taken the consequences, if report says true. But what I have to add to your previous knowledge is of the greatest importance and you could not have if from an higher authority than that of one who has been for upwards of five and forty years in the possession. *I am the original Mrs Smith.* As to the goodwoman so calling herself, it is no such thing I say, for I am the only one. That my second husband, Mr Jonas Smith of Shoreditch, where he then carried on our business in the hosiery line, might have occasionally employed and had some acquaintance with the person aforesaid, is more than probable; but her husband, and the only one she ever had in her life, was a country undertaker of the name of Shirt, and her maiden name was Grassmarket. Mr Shirt failed in his business and died in a poor wood cottage down a lane, *that*

you may depend upon, and Mrs Shirt then came to London and made a shift for herself the best way she could. I *could* say a rare deal more of one thing and another on all the pinks aforesaid, Mr Editor, but I disdayn. I merely just inscribe these few lines to show you what the person is who dares to call herself Mrs Smith, when her real name is nothing but Shirt.

I remain your servant to command, etc.

RUTH PRUE SMITH.

Editor Monthly Repository,
CHARLES FOXES.

By 1836 the "*Expository's*" case had become very desperate; yet such a contribution so much in the manner of Hood, to whom we should have been half disposed to attribute it if he had not been abroad, might have "created a soul under the ribs of death." But the opportunity was missed, and in June 1836 the *Repository* was transferred from Fox to R. H. Horne, from whom after a year Leigh Hunt received it well nigh *in articulo mortis*. Landor came to the rescue; Hunt himself contributed his vivacious "Blue Stocking Revels," but the fiat had gone forth, and the *Repository* expired in March 1838.

The Monthly Repository is a remarkable and almost unique instance of a periodical long supported by writers of marked ability without the incentive of pecuniary gain, partly from attachment to the leading spirit among them, and partly from a disinterested zeal for the propagation of their favourite ideas. This was at once its glory and its infirmity, insuring sincerity of conviction, but excluding those writers to whom the pen was ploughshare as well as sword. This considered, the general level of the writing must be pronounced high; and when the fierce political excitement of the day is taken into account, the general moderation of its tone, the diatribes of "Junius Redivivus" excepted, must appear remarkable. Compared with the bias of political and social thought at the present day, it seems to prove that opinion has become more liberal and

less radical. Its main defect is the last which its contributors would have suspected—narrowness. Each is broad enough in his own sphere, but seems to know nothing of the world of activity beyond it. Mighty movements were inaugurated during Fox's editorship; the physical sciences were arrayed and co-ordinated by the British Association; the ideas of the Middle Ages came back with the Oxford Tracts; the land began to be covered with railways; the first impulse was given to systematic colonisation. We should hardly have gleaned a hint of any of these things from the contributors to the *Repository* if Harriet Martineau had not found something to say on the last subject. Their excuse is that they were not naturally blind but artificially bandaged. We ourselves should know much less about contemporary movements than we do if we still travelled by stage coach and paid sevenpence for our morning newspaper.

CHAPTER V

FOX'S SERMONS—CHANNING AND TUCKERMAN—RAMMOHUN
ROY—LETTERS OF J. S. MILL—DOMESTIC AFFAIRS—
RUPTURE WITH THE UNITARIANS

THE period 1831-1834, so eventful for the country, left few individual citizens of eminence precisely as it had found them. Fox came out of it, if the same man in essence, yet dissimilar in position, in connections, in his general relation to the things of the world. We have seen how completely *The Monthly Repository*, so long a leading denominational organ, has been secularised in his hands, and reconciled with the broadest humanism. Yet this period of mutation in theological matters was also the flowering period of his celebrity and achievement as a pulpit orator, a character which, in its conventional sense, he was on the point of laying aside.

The discourses upon which Fox's reputation as a preacher mainly rests are comprised in three volumes, *Christ and Christianity, Sermons on the Mission, Character and Doctrine of Jesus of Nazareth*, 2 vols, 1831, and *Christian Morality, Sermons on the Principles of Morality inculcated in the Holy Scriptures, and their Application to the Present Condition of Society* (1833). In the former instance the date is that of the publication, not of the composition of the sermons, some of which are shown by MS. memoranda to have been delivered as far back as 1823. There is, consequently, no systematic structure, though an order corresponding to the chronology of the New Testa-

ment is observed from the announcement of the fundamental proposition, "Christ the Desire of all Nations," to the narrative of the Ascension. The sermons on *Christian Morality*, though also unsystematic, are closer in the dates of delivery, belonging for the most part to 1832.

The special characteristic of Fox's sermons may be defined as the union of rhetoric—oratorical art as distinguished from oratorical inspiration—with masculine vigour and genuine feeling. The combination is unusual, a constant endeavour to say striking things almost excluding the steady independent conviction of a speaker careless of effect, whose aim is rather to disburden his own bosom than to impress his audience. In Fox's case, however, although the outward vesture of thought is highly rhetorical, there is a complete absence of the conventionality characteristic of the mere rhetorician. The speaker is obviously discoursing of things for which he cares, and which move him deeply. He is clearly a true man. It follows that the theological element is not very conspicuous, and that it diminishes more and more with the progress of time. During the whole period covered by these discourses, Fox was outgrowing the position of a Dissenting Minister, and assuming that of a public instructor on most matters pertaining to the public and intellectual life of a people. The need of widening the merely professional area was evidently strongly impressed upon him at this time, and his career may be described as the evolution out of one character into another. Much that, by a reader acquainted only with the speaker's later point of view, might appear unreal and conventional in the sermons on Christ and Christianity, was entirely real at the time of its expression. It is probable, nevertheless, that these sermons taken by themselves would convey an incorrect impression of Fox's ministrations during the years 1823-1830. They are selected with a special object from the general body of his discourses, which would probably be found to have been as

a whole more deeply tinged by the spirit of humanity, and more attentive to secular concerns. The progress in this direction by 1831 is strongly evidenced by the sermons on Christian Morality. Fox had discarded denominational topics from *The Monthly Repository* upon becoming its proprietor, he was now to discover that no man can serve two masters; and that theology must go the way of sectarianism. The sermons on Morals—no formal disquisitions open to the taunt of being “mere morality”—but “on fire with emotion,” as Emerson declares that Morality must be if it is to soar into the sphere of Religion, form a necessary connecting link between the pulpit of an earlier day and the *Finsbury Lectures* and *Religious Ideas* yet to come. The events soon to be recorded doubtless accelerated Fox’s assumption of his ultimate position, but he must have taken it sooner or later.

The following is a good specimen of the style of the *Sermons on Christ and Christianity* on the not infrequent occasions when rhetoric was exalted into eloquence:—

Take our nature at its highest; endow it with the noblest gifts that heaven’s prodigality has ever lavished on humanity; assume intellect the most majestic; imagination that sits like a god, creating worlds, and peopling them with living souls; burning resplendent in the spirits of a hundred realms and a hundred generations; feelings whose mighty fervency would bear away a feeble mind with the fury of a whirlwind, but which hear the Master’s voice even in their utmost tamelessness; a spirit of God’s own nobility, full of high mindedness and boundless aspirations, and “Thoughts that wander through eternity”—these men, these rare men, these master-spirits of the age in which they live; whom century after century passes by, unhonoured with the commission to raise up their like for the world; whose names designate eras in the universal history of mankind;—these men are no nearer being above Christianity, or the teachings of Jesus, than the little child that loves him while it lisps its history, and repeats his prayer to Our Father. Their eyes gaze on the same world of religious

truth, by the same light of reason ; only they see more, because that light has brightened, the object remaining the same, from the dawning glimmer of rationality into the meridian blaze of genius. The spirit of Christ in them is a spirit of vaster power, of intenser love, and of a more sound and more capacious mind, but it is the same spirit. I give them only the simple tale which is the child's gospel ; and there, when the lordly intellect has subdued large regions of truth, it yet shall never weep that there are not more worlds to conquer. There their learning grows into a purer wisdom ; and imagination stands entranced among scenes of beauty, feeling its own paintings poor as the stained canvas to the clouds of gorgeous sunset. Though such minds may be as kingly mansions, Christianity dwells in them, just as she sojourns in the humblest hovels of ignorance ; neither disdaining the one nor being honoured by the other, but in both commanding ; consecrating both into a temple of the Lord ; and promising each a transformation into a house of God, eternal in the heavens.

This passage enshrines an original thought. Not so much can be said of the more celebrated prose dithyramb in the *Sermons on Christian Morality* upon the glories of Greece. Little can be added to Milton upon this theme, and all educated men, summoned to discourse upon it, would probably express themselves in substance much to the same effect. Not many, however, would be able to rival the elaborate structure and splendid diction which have given Fox's impassioned eulogy a place among the standard examples of British eloquence. It is introduced in connection with St Paul's preaching at Athens :—

Nor is it to him alone that our interest clings ; for from the dawn of intellect and freedom has Greece been a watchword in the earth. There rose the social spirit, to soften and refine her chosen race, and shelter, as in a nest, her gentleness from the rushing storm of barbarism ; there liberty first built her mountain throne, first called the waves her own and shouted across them a proud defiance to despotism's banded myriads ; there the arts and graces danced around humanity, and stored

man's home with comforts, and strewed his path with roses, and bound his brows with myrtle, and fashioned for him the breathing statue, and summoned him to temples of snowy marble, and charmed his senses with all forms of elegance, and threw over his final sleep their veil of loveliness ; there sprang poetry, like their own fabled goddess, mature at once, from the teeming intellect, girt with the arms and armour that defy the assaults of time and subdue the heart of man ; there matchless orators gave the world a model of perfect eloquence, the soul the instrument on which they played, and every passion of our nature but a tone which the master's touch called forth at pleasure ; there lived and taught the philosophers of bower and porch, of pride and pleasure, of deep speculation and of useful action, who developed all the acuteness, and refinement, and energy of mind, and were the glory of their country, when their country was the glory of the earth.

The Sermons on The New Testament brought Fox the following letter from Channing, at that time after Irving and Cooper, the first name in the United States in literature as well as in divinity :—

BOSTON,
Aug. 19, 1831.

MY DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your two volumes of sermons, which I have read with much pleasure and, I hope, profit, though not always agreeing with you, for I am less inclined to Mr Cappe's principles of interpretation than you are. But this difference of opinion in no way impairs my respect for the elevated spirits which they all breathe. I was particularly interested by the discourse entitled, *Christ's Apology for the Gentiles*. You have there discovered what seems to me a sincere faith in great and life-giving truths, and it comforts me to find any who really embrace them. Many talk about them, but few seem to comprehend them. Indeed there is a deep scepticism, almost universal, in regard to the worth and claims of human nature. Men have little or no faith in what they are, and in what they may become, no consciousness of the unbounded and immortal principle within them. Almost all religious teaching has tended to degrade them, to infuse self-

contempt. The wrong impressions of ages are to be effaced, before men can learn to look justly, wisely, on themselves, on their present state, on the future. Happily more powerful reformers than human teaching are at work. In the spirit of revolution which is now spreading over the world I see one tendency which is sure. It is rescuing men from the tyranny of the past, and perhaps nothing but the breaking up of old institutions, terrible as the first effects may be, can set the mind free to enter on a new career, to achieve something nobler than the low forms of religion and virtue which have come down from former ages. I have intimated that teaching alone cannot do the work of reform. Still it might do much if the spirit of martyrdom could be joined with the calmness of a deep-searching and far-looking wisdom. As yet we know very imperfectly what the union of Christian enthusiasm with calm and lofty philosophy would effect. I sometimes think that I have a conception of a method of speaking to men which is little understood, and I should rejoice more to see it realised than our ancestors did in the discovery of a new world. I should not speak so strongly of prevalent defects, were I not thoroughly conscious how largely I partake of them myself, and did I not believe that the expression of a want is one step towards getting it supplied. With earnest wishes for the improvement of your health and the continuance of your useful lectures, I am your sincere friend, WM. E. CHANNING.

A letter fitly written at the dawn of what Harriet Martineau was to entitle the Martyr Age of the United States. There are two other letters from Channing introducing distinguished Americans, Theodore Sedgwick and Orville Dewey.

NEW YORK,
May 29, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR,—Allow me to introduce to you Theodore Sedgwick Esquire, a young gentleman about to enter on the profession of Law, but who wishes to know something of Europe before fixing himself for life. He belongs to one of our most respected families, and is already distinguished by his zeal and success in availing himself of the best means of education

enjoyed in this country. It will be gratifying to you to know that his strong interest in your writings has induced him to ask this introduction to you. His family are devoted to liberal and rational views of religion, and hold the most enlarged and generous sentiments on political subjects. I have seen very little of Mr Sedgwick but his connection and reputation authorise me to ask for him the hospitality of all my friends.

I saw yesterday that the American edition of your sermons was announced. I rejoice that you are to do good more extensively in this country.

I am now in New York, on my way to Boston, from which I had been driven by the inclemency of the climate. My health is nearly restored after more than a year's suffering from disease and consequent debility. My physicians tell me to do nothing—but I feel as if I might venture on some exertion—*You* know something of the happiness of returning to one's ordinary labours after a long suspension of them. I have no hope of such vigour as I hear you are restored to, but I shall be grateful for a little.

Very sincerely, Your friend,

WM. E. CHANNING.

BOSTON,

March 27, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR,—This will be handed you by my friend, the Rev. Dr Dewey, a gentleman whose praise is in all our churches, and who is in every view one of our most distinguished men. I will thank you to introduce him to such members and other gentlemen as he will be happy to see. I am glad when we can send abroad such men, and I promise myself the best effects from the increasing intercourse between the intelligent and virtuous of both countries.

With sincere regards yours,

WM. E. CHANNING.

Literary and political activity at this period do not appear to have interfered with Fox's faithful performance of the usual duties of a Unitarian minister. The loose ecclesiastical organisation of the Unitarian Church does not allow its minister official distinctions; Fox could not be a Moderator, or a President, or a permanent Chairman. There was consequently little scope for anything like

ecclesiastical statesmanship, though occasions would arise transcending the narrow sphere of the individual congregation. One of these was the Domestic Mission, in which, once set on foot, modern Unitarianism has always revealed itself in one of its most efficient and creditable aspects. Fox deserves to be ranked among its fathers and founders. He had planned what he deemed a great stroke for it by placing the direction of the London Mission under no less a person than James Martineau, severed from his Dublin congregation. A salary of £300 was guaranteed, but Martineau "was conscious of no adequate store of resource and hopefulness for such a work." And, in fact, with every possible respect for the labours of the city missionary, the appointment of a Martineau to superintend them would have been a notable instance of the application of the razor to the block; and such work must have been especially inappropriate to one who owned that, among all his duties, the one he discharged with least pleasure and acceptance was that of pastoral visitation. Fox's exertions became known in America, and brought him a letter from the greatest name in the history of Domestic Missions, the admirable Tuckerman :—

BOSTON,
March 14, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have long felt that I owe you a very great debt of gratitude, and I now address you not to pay that debt, but simply to acknowledge it. Your speech before the British and Foreign Unitarian Association on the subject of a ministry for the poor, honourable to you as it was, and is, when viewed only as an intellectual effort, was to my mind yet unspeakably more honourable and interesting and delightful, in the spirit of divine benevolence which inspired and pervaded it. You, my dear Sir, are one of the few,—yes I am compelled to say the few—who seem to me distinctly to have conceived of the character and extent and importance of the ministry I have proposed, and fully to accord with me as to the demand which should be made for it till it is obtained. I am not indeed much

surprised to find a slowness of mind to apprehend the interests and claims of this object, when I see with what an administration of our religion they are contenting themselves, to whom we must make our appeals for the institution and support of a ministry for the poor. To confess the whole truth on this subject I never myself felt very strongly the great deficiencies of the common and established modes of teaching and of extending the Christianity till I entered upon my present service, in which I have been made most painfully to feel how narrow and partial, how much below and unworthy of the spirit and purpose of our Lord is that poor routine of sabbatical and other occasional exercises which leaves the mind and heart respecting the true character of human relations, and therefore of human duties and interests and happiness, as it found them. Human relations,—the true character of that relation which every human being sustains to the Almighty Father ; to him who is almighty infinite and everlasting Love—and as a consequence of this, the true character of that relation which every man sustains to his fellow man ;—this simple and sublime but most comprehensive doctrine—how little is it understood as it was taught by Jesus ? How little do we see of its power upon the professed disciples of Jesus ? How feebly and inefficiently has the pulpit, and have books too, spoken of this great subject ? Is it not so ? How many are living and dying in the comforting conviction that they are Christians, and are looking with confidence to the Christian's crown and blessedness, and are proposed to the world as the models of the character to which Christianity would form its believers, who yet never for a moment felt when they saw a poor ignorant fallen and debased fellow-being, he is my brother, the child of my father the partaker of a common nature with myself—and has the claims upon my heart of a brother's interest in him and of a brother's care for him ? But in a correspondence with you which I hope will not end with a single interchange of letter, I will not begin with complaints. I took my pen to thank you for your speech for which I have long felt deeply obliged to you and for your sermon in the December number of the Monthly Repository, to which my attention was directed a few days since by my friend Dr Channing. May God prosper your efforts, my dear Sir, in this excellent course ! I am but a poor instrument in this ministry. The spirit indeed is willing,

aye, and more than willing, earnestly desirous of usefulness in it. But the flesh is with me very weak. It sinks under the weariness which is consequent upon the exertions of four or five hours, and I go to my dinner from the labours of the morning too much worn by fatigue even to enjoy the food which is required to sustain me. But if I can be so favoured as to be enabled to call forth any interest in this service which shall be comensurate with its importance, if I can be made an instrument of establishing a permanent and adequate ministry for the poor, the neglected, the outcasts of a single city, I should consider the privilege as cheaply purchased with my life. Let me pray you then, my friend—for so I hope you will permit me to call you—to persevere in the good work which you have so well and ably begun. Let no difficulties daunt and no disappointments discourage you. Our Lord and Master calls for the Ministry at least quite as distinctly as he does that his religion should be preached to the rich. And do what you can to make it understood, that if fit instruments shall be obtained for the work, it will not, in its consequences, be a less blessing to the rich and virtuous and pious, than it will be to the poor and vicious and debased for whom it is immediately intended. I will send you by the first favourable opportunity which I can find, a volume of my reports, etc. To the reports of the first year of my service, I attach no importance and I am quite willing that they should pass into utter oblivion. But I am willing also that you should survey my work *ab initio*, and therefore will send to you the whole series. Will you please to remember me very affectionately to Dr Bowring when you shall see him? A few days ago I received a letter and a volume from him, and I mean soon to write to him. I will beg also to be remembered with great respect and regard to Rammohun Roy, with whom I exchanged one or two letters while he was in Calcutta. Should he come to our country he will find open arms and hearts to welcome him. If any of your friends shall intend to visit Boston it will give me very great pleasure to receive them, and pray number among your hearty friends,

J. TUCKERMAN.

Tuckerman came to England in the spring of 1834, and made Fox's personal acquaintance. The effect of his

speaking, and of that of his colleague, Jonathan Phillips, is thus described by Martineau :—

Their benevolent and devout enthusiasm came upon us like the angel descending upon the sleeping waters, and their recital of what was being done to uplift and evangelise the neglected classes in Boston fell as a convincing and converting word, and yet a word of hope and zeal upon our conscience.

Fox at this time had the chance of becoming acquainted—perhaps did become acquainted—with a more illustrious American even than Channing, in the person of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who on 21st July 1833 arrived in London with this introduction from the Rev. H. Ware :—

MY DEAR SIR,—The Rev. R. W. Emerson, my friend and successor in my charge at Boston, will probably visit England before his return home, and I cannot deny myself the pleasure of making him acquainted with you and you with him. He leaves home for the benefit of his health, but I trust will be strong enough to preach for you by the time he arrives in London,

Very respectfully and truly,

H. WARE, JR.

CAMBRIDGE,

Dec. 22, 1832.

Fox may have received this letter from Emerson's own hand, for it has not been through the post unless as an enclosure in a letter from Emerson, which probably would have been preserved. He may have given Emerson his introduction to Bowring, who took him over Jeremy Bentham's house ; and that to Mill, who gave him a card for Carlyle. Emerson remained only three weeks in London, and certainly did not preach at South Place.

Another teacher of the highest eminence was not unfrequently brought into contact with Fox at this period. This was Rajah Rammohun Roy, the firstfruit of Western ideas in their application to India, the first Hindoo social

reformer, and practically the first Indian monotheist. The title of monotheist indeed justly belonged to the founder of the Sikh religion and many other Indian religious reformers, but their teaching, from motives of policy or from the spell of tradition, had dealt so tenderly with the ancient polytheism that their monotheism seemed at most an esoteric doctrine. There was nothing esoteric in the teaching of Rammohun Roy, destined, after a temporary eclipse from the death of its promulgator, to become an important factor in Indian civilisation as the "Brahmo Somaj" of Keshub Chunder Sen. Nor was Rammohun Roy less courageous as a social reformer, aiding in Lord William Bentinck's abolition of suttee; while he manifested the like independence in his attitude towards the Christian churches, adopting, as the result of his own examination of the Scriptures, a creed which allowed him no possibility of intimate co-operation with any but the Unitarians. Unitarians could not but feel their cause strengthened by this verdict in its favour from an unbiassed inquirer; and when, in 1831, the Rajah visited England, partly in the hope of gaining something for India by the discussions on the renewal of the East India Company's Charter, partly to resist the endeavours of the Brahmins to get the Indian Government's prohibition of suttee rescinded, his relations with their leading representatives became intimate and cordial. Several short notes to Fox manifest a friendly feeling, but the only one sufficiently important for publication is the following, indicative of the social difficulties which beset Indian reformers:—

48 BEDFORD SQUARE,
January 27, 1832.

Confidential.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have the pleasure to acknowledge yours of the 26th instant, in which you do me the honour to invite me

in very kind terms to your anniversary dinner on the 8th of February. It is truly mortifying to me to hesitate even for a moment with the request of one whom I so highly esteem and respect. But I have before explained to you how much attending public dinners might be injurious to my interest in India and disagreeable to the feelings of my friends there. When you recollect, my dear Sir, that I attended the anniversary of the Unitarian Association in defiance of the advice of my medical attendants, who declared that my joining so large an assembly while I was troubled with inflammation would endanger my life, I feel satisfied that you will not attribute my absence to indifference about your success.

I was induced to attend Dr Williams' anniversary dinner under an assurance from the Rev. Mr Aspland that the party would consist of friends who felt warm interest in my behalf. But even then I felt all the time disquiet, and low spirited. However should there be any divine service before the dinner at the meeting or at your Chapel I shall be very happy to attend at the services and return home. I severely feel the absence of our much esteemed friend Dr Bowring. With my highest regard and respect I remain, my dear sir, yours most faithfully,
RAMMOHUN ROY.

Rammohun Roy's apprehensions as to his health were not groundless. He never saw India again, dying at Bristol of an attack of brain fever on 27th September 1833. Fox preached a funeral sermon, afterwards published on 14th October; and Eliza Flower set a hymn composed probably by Fox, for the occasion. The general sorrow in all Christian churches might recall the beautiful Hindoo legend of the mystic teacher for whose body Hindoos and Mussulmans contended, each claiming the deceased as their own, and wishing to inter his remains with their own rites. Long they strove, until someone lifting up the cloth which shrouded the bier revealed that the body was no longer there. In its place lay a heap of flowers, which were shared equally among the disputants.

Another remarkable stranger who sought Fox's acquaintance at this time was Gustave D'Eichthal, the

friend and correspondent of Mill, through whom Fox probably made his acquaintance. He describes himself as Saint-Simonian missionary in England, and, regretting that he is suddenly called away to Paris, promises to make on his return a pilgrimage to the hyperborean regions of Clapton, learn from Fox's own mouth what impression Saint Simon's doctrines have made upon him, and procure from him information needful to Saint-Simonians respecting the religious condition of England. It does not appear whether the interview ever took place; perhaps D'Eichthal's mission was abandoned on account of the internal dissensions which about this time transformed Saint Simon's apostles into bankers and engineers; as, in the wars of the giants, the younger gods "concealed themselves in forms of beast and bird." D'Eichthal in his latter years devoted himself to New Testament criticism, and wrote a valuable work on the origin and sources of the Gospels.

It is strange that so little evidence remains of Fox's active participation in politics during the exciting period of the Reform Bill. His interest must have been intense, and, according to John Saunders's memoir in *The People's Journal* (1847), was at one time manifested by the daily delivery of open air harangues. "He was," Francis Place told Saunders, "the bravest of us all." But, save for two insignificant notes from him to Place, the record of his speech at the great demonstration in Lincoln's Inn Fields on 31st October 1831, and some traces of connection with the Political Unions, for whose gathering Eliza Flower set a hymn, scarcely a vestige remains of Fox's participation in the Reform movement other than his writings in the *Repository*. His political capacity has been variously estimated. Roebuck, at a later period, speaks of it with contempt: "Little Fox was about as fit for a political chief as I am for a ballet dancer." But perhaps Roebuck underrated his abilities in the Terpsichorean

department. Roebucks are eminent for agility, and this specimen of the tribe bounded from ultra-Radicalism into the arms of the Emperor of Austria and Jefferson Davis. The remark seems mainly to refer to Fox's capacity as a wirepuller, an indispensable department of politics in a free country, but not especially congenial to the higher mind. Cobden, whom also Roebuck honours with the character of a poor creature, was notoriously inefficient on a committee. Mr W. J. Linton, who had much better opportunities of observation than Roebuck, judged differently. "Fox ought to have been the leader, as well as a great teacher, of the people. I think he was only prevented by a physique which made him inactive." In his *Life of James Watson*, Linton speaks to the same effect, but even more emphatically :—

William Johnson Fox, the most eloquent orator of his day, the virtual founder of the new school of radicalism which looked beyond the established traditions of the French Revolution, and, more poetical, escaped the narrowness of Utilitarianism, a man wiser than his compeers, who but for lack of boldness (perhaps accounted for by his physique) had been the royal leader of English democracy.

Apart, nevertheless, from open air addresses and his contributions to *The Monthly Repository*, Fox must have exerted considerable subterranean activity in politics, of which few traces remain. But for the following letter from Mill it would not have been known how important his co-operation was deemed when *The London Review*, the organ of philosophical radicalism, was founded by Sir William Molesworth.

[Postmark, *July* 17, 1834.]

I have some news for you. Molesworth, without any suggestion or solicitation, has spontaneously offered to establish, at his own expense, the review we were talking of, making but one condition, viz., that substantially it shall be under my

direction—he knows that I cannot, on account of my position in the India House, be myself the editor, or be ostensibly connected with the review in any way, except as an occasional writer—but he will appoint his editor under the complete understanding that he is to be guided altogether by me.

This is a much more feasible scheme than the former one because there will be but one person [Molesworth] to satisfy, and he a man of decided movement principles, docile, and who will certainly be pleased with the thing if it is such as will please us. At the same time we must not allow him to throw away his money, we must see our way clearly to being able to carry it on before we announce it—a failure would be disastrous to the cause. I am anxious to talk the matter over with you, and let us lay our heads together to see what can be done. A great part of the chance of success will depend upon the degree in which you can co-operate.

We can speak of it as Molesworth's review ; none out of our own circle should be told that I have more to do with it than any of the rest of us.

Do think about it, and if you do not come to me in a day or two we will come to you.

J. S. M.

This important letter, the earliest trace of the establishment of a review under Molesworth's auspices, entirely corroborates Mill's account of the transaction in his autobiography :—

In the summer of 1834 Sir William Molesworth, himself a laborious student and a precise and metaphysical thinker capable of aiding the cause by his pen as well as by his purse, proposed to establish a Review provided I would consent to be the real, if I could not be the ostensible editor.

The letter also proves the groundlessness of Carlyle's expectation that the editorship would be offered to him, and the unreasonableness of his resentment when he was disappointed. "He will appoint his editor under the complete understanding that he is to be guided altogether by me." Imagine Carlyle "guided altogether" by Mill

or any other man ! Fox was hardly more qualified than Carlyle for the rôle of understudy ; and we may be certain that Carlyle's notion that he was to be the editor was no better founded than his idea that the post might be offered to himself. Mill's supremacy over the *Review* amounted to despotism, and, as we learn from Mrs Fawcett's *Life of Molesworth*, went to the length of rejecting articles by his own employer, an almost unique instance of the inversion of the usual relations between editor and proprietor. Mill's diagnosis of the fiery young baronet as at bottom a docile personage proved surprisingly accurate. The contemner of academical discipline and conventional restrictions of every kind was sufficiently tractable in the hands of his pastors and masters, provided that he had chosen them himself. " I am," he writes to Mrs Grote in October 1835, " rather out of humour with John for refusing my article on Lord Brougham," adding in extenuation of the presumptuous deed, " It was too violently sarcastic and rather dry." The erratic Chancellor afforded abundant scope for sarcasm, but assuredly no excuse for dryness.

The *Review* first appeared in April 1835, and absorbed the *Westminster*, Molesworth as formerly providing the funds, exactly a year afterwards. The autumn of 1834 had been occupied in preparations, and both Mill and Molesworth were most sanguine. " John is in such spirits," writes Molesworth to Mrs Grote, " that he says he would make it succeed single-handed." Fox's slender connection with it will be noticed in another place.

The other scheme for the establishment of an advanced Liberal organ to take the place of the then unsatisfactory *Westminster*, discarded in the above as less promising than Sir William Molesworth's, had been thus outlined in a letter from Mill to Fox on 26th November 1833 :—

Roebuck, Strutt, Buller, and other radical members of Parliament have a scheme to start a radical review as their organ, with

individual signatures like J. R., in which we should all of us write—the thing looks possible, and everybody seems so eager about it that I really think it will come to pass.

If so, it will train up both readers and writers for *The Monthly Repository*, *The Examiner*, Tait, and all. Strength is multiplied by division when it is *growing* strength.

The same letter contained an earnest appeal elicited by the situation of *The Examiner*, an organ of polished and cultivated radicalism which, under the spirited direction of Fonblanque, lacked no requisite for war but the sinews. Fonblanque's exceptional ability as a journalist was rightly held to warrant a special appeal to his political allies to rescue him from the embarrassments which he had incurred in fighting their battles :—

The Examiner has hoisted a flag of distress. Fonblanque cannot go on, and the paper may stop any week. He can retrench so as to cover the weekly loss if he had £1000 in hand. This he proposes raising by inducing 100 persons to pay £10 each, for which they are to receive his paper for ten years, and for which (without counting on any increase of sale) he can carry it on on the chance of a reduction of the stamp duties within that time. What think you of the scheme? And if you think well of it, would you—not subscribe yourself—but mention the proposition to any persons you know who would?

A much better plan *selon moi* would be that someone who has £1000 should put it down himself to become the proprietor, keeping Fonblanque as editor only, and the other persons interested remaining creditors of the paper. If I were not in the India House and were going to remain in England I would do so immediately, that is, I would propose it to Fonblanque, who I think must consent—and I would have him as political editor and take the literary and art department myself. But that it seems cannot be—and I fear nobody else will—though it would at worst be only an advance without interest, at best an extremely profitable investment.

We may be certain that Fonblanque would never have consented to give up his proprietorship and absolute

control of the journal under any circumstances. The plan of a subscription in advance was resorted to, and in January 1834 Fonblanque tells Fox that he has seventy-three ten-year subscribers, and looks to help from Glasgow and Birmingham towards completing the number. At a later period he writes :—

Many thanks, my dear Sir, for your kind interest and exertions. I think the thing now safe, and its safety is owing to such friends as Mrs Taylor, Mill, yourself, and some others who have put shoulder to the wheel. When out of the slough, I have no doubt of doing well. The disproportion between expenditure and price has been the mischief, and while set fast I could make no change for better economy.

The reduction in the stamp duty, in the hope of which Fonblanque was carrying on the paper, was effected in 1836, and did much towards relieving the difficulties under which newspapers addressed to an intellectual and therefore a limited public had hitherto laboured.

The subject of another letter from Mill to Fox (Feb. 22, 1834) is not very clear. He seems to refer to some proposed change in the law of libel, involving, Mill thought, wider issues than were apparent on the surface :—

Respecting libel I adhere to the full extent of my opinion, and should be glad, if you differ from me, to make *The Monthly Repository* the scene of an amicable controversy on the subject. I think “tolerance, freedom, and sincerity” would not be generated; to suppose they would, is to suppose that the revelations in question would ultimately lead to this, and that true statements would be believed and false once disbelieved; now my whole argument rests upon this as its foundation, that the truth, in any natural sense of the term, cannot in such cases be got at by the public; that true charges cannot be distinguished from false ones by such a tribunal. I should expect one of two results, that the lives of all but the independent in fortune and brave in heart would be thoroughly artificialised,

by becoming one continual struggle to save appearances, and escape misinterpretation, or else that freedom would work itself out by what seems to have taken place in America, calumny and scandal carried to such a length that nobody believes anything which appears in print, and, as none can escape such imputations, nobody regards them. J. S. M.

The letter is accompanied by a postscript to Eliza Flower respecting the "Songs of the Months" then appearing with her music in the *Repository* :—

The three beautiful children shall have justice done them ere the appearance of the third. The birth of the oldest was announced, and a good word spoken for the expected family.

February is a beauty, but March [Sarah Flower's "Winds and Clouds"] is grand.

I wish I could give him [Fox] half of my health, and take half of some of his other endowments.

Fox's reply to this letter called forth the following, with an allusion to a "Saturday scheme" which seems to have originated with Fox, but whose nature is unexplained :—

I know all about the Saturday scheme, and in any way if it takes effect I hope to have a share in it. How could it give pain, or anything but extreme pleasure to me? but all the pros and cons have been discussed yestereven, and she [Mrs Taylor] will have told you all that we think about it.

On the truth question she completely agrees with me.

Health and peace and blessing and love to both, and continue to give some love to me as I do to you.

J. S. M.

It was sweet of you to write those last words.

Such unwonted outpourings of emotion afford the key to the sweet and delicate nature of Mill; who, as a logician and economist, is hastily assumed to have been as dry as his pursuits, but who was in reality a man of most

sensitive and affectionate nature, thwarted and warped by the circumstances of his environment and education, and by the system of philosophy which he inherited from his father as the Lord of Glamis inherits a ghost for an heirloom, but which, at least in its ethical aspects, he completely transformed. Nature and Education had a hard battle in Mill, but Nature was almost always conqueror, and never more than in the internal conflict he was then sustaining. The especial tenderness towards Fox and Eliza Flower is explained by the probability of their having been at the time his sole confidants in his affairs of the heart.

Nothing has come to light to impugn the essentially platonic character of Mill's attachment to Harriet Taylor. If Petrarch's Laura was, as usually believed, a married woman, the correspondence between the relations of the two pairs is amazing, even to their connection with Avignon. But though Petrarch will have Laura to have been his monitor on sundry occasions, he never represents her as an Egeria. The field of mutual interests common to the English lovers was infinitely wider ; and comparison might afford no fallacious measure of Woman's progress between the fourteenth and the nineteenth century. Fox also had his Egeria : and at the time when Mill penned the affectionate messages quoted above, the domestic relations and attitude towards society of all four were becoming so critical as to account for any effusive warmth of fellow-feeling.

To investigate the causes of domestic incompatibility is usually an undertaking as profitless as thankless. In some cases, such as Byron's, the capacity for married life is utterly lacking to one if not both of the parties : in others, such as that of the Carlyles, the seeming incompatibility resolves itself into excess of jealous affection. In most cases, however, little more can be said than that the choice was unwise ; to detect and unravel the causes as

well as the consequences of this unwisdom requires an intimacy of knowledge which the biographer can rarely command. In Fox's case, notwithstanding, the problem is simplified by the probability, already adverted to, that he chose not, but was chosen, that he was not even led, but was driven, into matrimony. He seems to have honestly striven to adapt himself to the unfortunate position thus created, but what might be possible to one who having no affection to bestow, has none to expect, is impossible to one of warm heart and overflowing sympathies. As we have seen, the birthday verses so long addressed to Eliza Florance cease shortly after her becoming Eliza Fox. Even then, Fox and his wife might have agreed tolerably upon a desert island, but the intellectual society in which he moved afforded consolations impossible to reject, but of which he could not avail himself without transforming indifference into hostility. We have made acquaintance with Eliza Flower, and have found her one as capable of giving as worthy of receiving impassioned adoration. There can be no question of the intensity of the affection with which Fox inspired her, nor any of its perfect purity in the sexual and conventional sense: nor yet again that it was of the highest benefit to her in providing an outlet for the feeling which in so many women has been perforce suppressed until it has withered away. Fox on his part found himself raised into a higher sphere than was quite natural to him. His nature and Eliza Flower's were indeed kindred, but hers was the higher. We are sensible in him of "specks of earth," not to be censured or lamented, for his work as a practical politician would have been impossible without them, but still placing him on a distinctly lower plane than such spiritual geniuses as Channing and Martineau. He had besides a propensity for taking his ease in Zion, against which the ardent, unworldly, impulsive nature of Eliza Flower, careless to a fault of discomfort and disadvantage, ever

aiming at the highest things and finding its full expression in the most spiritual of the arts, was a continuous and efficient protest.

But whatever felicity and furtherance Fox and Eliza Flower derived from their attachment must necessarily be gained at the expense of another. Eliza Fox was by no means willing to renounce her claim upon her husband's affections. Whether she really cared for him is difficult to determine: he certainly did not think so, and if Mrs Bridell Fox is correct in imputing the alienation, as she seems to do, to her mother's real or apparent neglect of her father during his terrible illness in 1822, it arose before Eliza Flower had become an influence in his life. There is no sign of her ever having aided him in anything unless, if a trivial piece of gossip which thistledown-like has floated down the stream of Time may be relied upon, by undertaking to tell his stories for him better than he could himself. Eliza Flower, on the other hand, could never work long enough or hard enough for the object of her affection: community of effort and aim could not but engender romantic friendship, and romantic friendship is but another form of love. It was not, apparently, until the death of the Flowers' father in February 1829, that the relation avowedly assumed this character, when sympathy stirred Fox's soul to its depths, and the orphans were thrown in a manner upon his protection as their trustee. Mrs Fox's dissatisfaction must have gone on increasing, and in December 1832 she addressed to her husband a formal letter of complaint. When inmates of the same dwelling take to writing to each other the case is indeed desperate. The letter is lost, but its tenor appears from Fox's reply, whose candour and considerateness do him honour, and which proposes the best course of action possible under such painful circumstances. The prospect of a true union is utterly dissipated; and the law will not accord the release eagerly desired by one at least of the

parties to the ill-starred contract. Let them, then, save what may yet be saved from the wreck, and seek a *modus vivendi* which may give tranquillity, though happiness be denied. Fox would clearly be thankful if he could see his way to an absolute separation, but the interests of his congregation and his children forbid :—

MY DEAR ELIZA,—I have been long in answering your letter, for I have been too much occupied to think, and I could not feel certain, without some thought, of rightly understanding its spirit and object. I have no wish for you to be “deceitful,” my wish is directly the reverse. See whom you please, avoid whom you please, at home and abroad. Only let me, equally unquestioned and unmolested, see whom I please and avoid whom I please, at home and abroad.

As to “old friends,” who can have no idea of separate feelings about us, they cannot have been very close observers, if they are not aware to a considerable extent of the incompatibility of our modes of thought, feelings, tastes, and habits; and if they have any good sense they will think the better of *our* good sense and our *undeceitfulness* for not affecting an identification which does not exist; and for not concealing a sympathy which does exist, and which, by restoring me from sickness, and giving me energy and stimulus for unprecedented exertion, has indirectly been advantageous to you. Friends, old and new, are deceived if they take any other view of the matter, which I certainly do not wish.

No doubt yours has been “a struggle on principle.” I only regret that it has been on an erroneous principle, so that all the success that could have been attained would have been more injurious to yourself even than failure. Your proposal of a total separation had more principle in it, and you were mistaken if you supposed I had any dread of the consequences to myself of that threatening. I deprecate it, for if it were to injure my pecuniary resources that would be a disadvantage to the children, and for yourself it would have been far less comfortable than other arrangements which might easily be made. Instead of this extreme measure on the one hand, and of an everlasting and unavailing struggle on the other, why should we not agree so far to part as to become independent beings,

neither exercising nor submitting to control, but voluntarily abiding under the same roof, for mutual convenience and the benefit of the children? By superseding this talk of rights, which are as bad as wrongs when they only produce suffering; we should put ourselves in an amicable position towards each other instead of a hostile one, and be likely to realise more of mutual kindness, accommodation and comfort than can arise from the present course.

Fox then enters into some alterations in pecuniary and other domestic arrangements which would become needful, and concludes :—

This is the outline, which I certainly shall not attempt either to persuade or to tease you into compliance with, but which I think your enlightened and voluntary adoption of will promote the comfort of both. Think of it well, and ask any advice you like. You are at full liberty to show this. Do not accede under the notion of sacrifice, but consult your own comfort, and God bless you !

At the time this letter was not unattended with effect. “ Nearly two years ago,” says Fox in the letter to his mother about to be quoted, “ Mrs Fox and I came to some arrangements by which we agreed to interfere with each other as little as possible. We were to consider ourselves as separated, except as living under the same roof that my income and means of providing for the children might not be injured.” The rupture of this arrangement is described in the same letter, given in an abridged form for the sake of omitting all imputations upon Mrs Fox except such as are absolutely essential to the comprehension of the case :—

UPPER CLAPTON,
July 21, 1834.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I find Charles’s letter has been frightening you all a bit, especially as I had not written as I had intended. There is, however, no cause for alarm, and I hope some

for congratulation, in the long run at least, but I will tell you, though it must be done very briefly now. I should think you and the girls must have guessed out a good deal, though it was not a pleasant matter for me to talk of.

Very soon after my marriage I found that I had made a blunder, and though a moderate share of comfort, disposition to help me in my exertions, at least some sympathy in them and economy in the management of their fruits, would have pretty well contented me, I did not find even these. . . . In this forlorn state of things my previous acquaintance with Lizzie naturally increased in sympathy and regard ; I was left quite dependent upon her in the state to which the last long illness reduced me, and in which I verily believe that I owe the preservation of my mind, if not of my life, to her wise and careful attention, though often thwarted and harassed ; and since that, it is only by her help, transcribing from my shorthand, writing sermons and articles from my dictation which I could not have done with my own hand ; looking through volumes for me when I wanted in haste to ascertain some historical fact or other, and in short working for me, often many hours, day after day—for instance the whole of my last volume of sermons was written out by her from shorthand notes at the rate of a sermon a day—it is only, I say, by her help that I have been able to hold on at all. This intimacy has of course been another source of irritation ; although Miss Flower never for years, came within this house but by Mrs Fox's free invitation, unless I was too ill to go out. Thus stood matters at the commencement of the present year. . . . At length, about three weeks ago, while I could not move, and knew nothing of what was going on, she took to consulting two members of the congregation. . . . These counsellors of hers neither came, wrote, or sent to me, but got hold of two or three others, told their story, and persuaded those others to join them in a letter to me, advising me either to accommodate matters to Mrs Fox's satisfaction, or to resign my office. You will suppose what I did. I instantly resigned, and demanded to know what was laid to my charge. This was what they neither expected nor intended. They all backed out of making any charge whatever against me ; a very little inquiry showed them that they had been misled. The two original movers were speedily left alone with their client, and having received from the others a sufficient writtent retracta-

tion of their hasty letter, with earnest requests from all who knew of the affray that I would not persist in resigning on account of it, I consented to withdraw the resignation. But I have done so with the full understanding that after all this it is not to be expected that Mrs Fox and I should continue to live together. . . . Now I must end this long story. Farewell, God bless you all.

W. J. Fox.

Matters, however, did not proceed as smoothly as Fox anticipated. He writes a week later :—

UPPER CLAPTON,
July 31, 1834.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I only write a few words to-day, just to tell you how things are going on, and what a comfort your letter has been to me, referring as it did to the outset of these evils, and showing the clear view you had of them at the beginning. Since I wrote there has been this change, that I have determined on giving the congregation six months' notice of my intention to dissolve the connection between us ; this will give them ample time to institute any investigation they please ; from none have I any reason to shrink ; and meanwhile I shall proceed to an entire and public separation from Mrs Fox. . . . One reason why I determined to give the congregation notice was that I found many who were convinced of the complete falsehood of the chief allegations, yet were so afraid of what the orthodox would say that they could not give up the idea of my compromising with her in some way, and trying to go on again. Now nothing upon earth shall make me do this. And as I found that long and excited talks with people were beginning to act badly on my frame, already debilitated by some weeks' confinement, I resolved to cut this matter short. . . . Of course all this harassment coming just now, is not good for me ; except for the exceeding comfort of the deliverance at the end of it. And now, my dear Mother, have no fears for me of any kind, it is all working for my peace and good. It will be a blessed thing for the children. And as for Lizzie (who has been fiercely and falsely attacked) her heart is as brave as it is pure and true. With the help of her hand, I have twenty-two pages of my own in this Repository, all done within the month, besides eight

more postponed for want of room ; and all the reading, correcting, etc., done : so that any way my working powers are not much impaired. With love to all, farewell.

Yours affectionately,

W. J. Fox.

The letter to the congregation thus announced was issued on 15th August, and was afterwards printed in *The Morning Chronicle* of 6th September, whence it was copied into W. P. Scargill's *Autobiography of a Dissenting Minister*, published in the same year. In it Fox takes no notice of any imputations on his moral deportment, which had indeed by this time disappeared, but assumes the case against him to be grounded upon his views on the dissolubility of marriage, his unhappy relations with his wife, and his avowed preference for another. His line is to contest the right of members of the congregation to interfere with his domestic affairs. After stating that until very recently he had felt secure of the respect and affection of his people, and that he had suddenly found himself exposed to an inquisitorial scrutiny, he continues :—

Whatever may have been the trials of my domestic life through many long years, to whose or to what fault (if fault there be) they are owing, are questions on which only continued and close intimacy can justify anyone in forming an opinion. Assuredly they are not fit subjects for argument before congregational authorities, still less for a decision by a self-constituted and secret tribunal, however respectable its individual members.

Scargill, into whose soul also the iron had entered, considers the affair an example of "the impertinent interference of dissenting congregations with their ministers, and also of the weariness which the highest talents will sometimes superinduce upon the levers of novelty."

Fox's change of attitude had no doubt been due to the

discovery that a considerable portion of his congregation were dissatisfied with the position he had assumed, and desired to dissolve the connection. If any charge of immorality had been brought against him, it was dropped, and his opponents rested their case solely upon his advocacy of divorce in cases of incompatibility of temper ; and his application of this view, so far as the state of the law allowed him, to the particular case of himself and Mrs Fox. Incautious speeches of his own, wrung from him when smarting under the annoyance of inquisitorial perquisitions, were freely used against him : and the letter to Mrs Fox cited above, though composed with the sincerest wish " to seek peace, and ensue it," was made a campaign document. The congregation met on September, and by a large majority exonerated Fox and requested him to withdraw his resignation. The dissenting minority issued a protest on 4th September, which was denounced in another congregational meeting on 14th September. On 21st September a final trial of strength took place, with the result that 46 seatholders, occupying with their families 120 seats, and comprising many names revered among Unitarians to this day, definitely withdrew. Their protest was directed to be expunged from the chapel books. The counter memorial had been signed on the spot by 113 seatholders, to whom many others were subsequently added. Without any impeachment of the perfect good faith of the minority, they could hardly be uninfluenced by the apprehension that any apparent leniency towards Fox's Miltonic views on the question of divorce would be made a reproach to their denomination, and Milton himself would hardly have fared better at their hands. They did not share these views, and why should they suffer for them ? The same motives prompted a formal resolution of disownment passed by the other five Unitarian ministers of London, from which, however, as will be seen, the most distinguished minister of the Unitarian Church,

though regretting Fox's opinions, entirely dissented. It does not appear whether the divines, whose action must have been autocratic, and who did not consider it necessary to hear Fox in his own defence, condemned him on the ground of any supposed transgression of recognised morality, or that of the alleged inconsistency of his views with the precepts of the New Testament. If on the former, they were mistaken. The case might very well be rested upon the character of Eliza Flower, who might have thought and probably did think a breach of conventional morality justifiable under the circumstances, but who, if she had translated her opinion into action, would assuredly have never stooped to deception, but would have taken the position and anticipated the conduct of George Eliot. It is needless, however, to consider a merely hypothetical case, for the true state of circumstances appears from a confidential letter from Mill to Fox, written on 14th July, when the crisis in the congregation was most acute. Fox seems to have then thought it inconsistent with his personal dignity to deny specific charges. Mill earnestly exhorts him to reconsider. Since the charges can be truthfully denied, why should they not? Nor is it necessary for his integrity to enter into the question whether the conduct imputed to him but disclaimed by him, would or would not have been a legitimate consequence of his speculative opinions:—

It seems to me quite enough if you appeal to those articles in the *Repository* as containing your principles on the subject. You might say that you have acted no otherwise than in consistency with those principles: and if they ask you whether the particular fact is true, you might deny altogether their concern with it or right to enquire into it, but nevertheless profess your willingness voluntarily to give the information sought, by denying the assertion. We all think it of great importance that every public mention of the charge should be accompanied by mention of your denying it; and also that the effect of

this denial should not, unless it be absolutely necessary to your integrity, be injured by the public profession of the extent to which your principles go in that one matter.

It is manifest that Mill knew that the assertion could be truthfully denied : and moreover that it did not rest upon any evidence as to matter of fact, but was merely an inference from the opinions attributed to Fox.

It is hardly probable that the ecclesiastical tribunal would have proceeded so abruptly or so drastically but for the growing feeling that Fox was becoming something of a nuisance to the denomination, as he on his part felt that the denomination was becoming a hindrance to himself. Both feelings had already come clearly to light in an article by him in the *Repository* for April 1833 : "A letter to the Rev. —, Unitarian Minister of —" — *i.e.* Dr Lant Carpenter, who had remonstrated with him privately. He frankly admits that, "there has certainly been a withdrawment of support, by Unitarians, from *The Monthly Repository*." This he ascribes to the unprogressive character of the denomination.

I cannot but perceive that the hostility manifested towards *The Monthly Repository* is of the same species with that which attempted to neutralise my opposition to infidel prosecutions, which embarrassed my advocacy of East India missions, which for so long a time postponed the establishment of a City mission or missions for the poor of large towns, and which has baffled various attempts that I have made at different times to render the Association more efficient.

The weak point in Fox's position in 1834 was that while his opponents could not have denied all these points to be excellent in theory, they would have made no such admission on the one point which he knew well to be the real stone of stumbling, his advocacy of the freedom of divorce. It had been a mistake to give prominence to a theme so distasteful to the majority of his readers, nor would he have

done so had he not been personally interested in it. On the abstract merits of the question, the present writer may be permitted to repeat what he has said upon a more celebrated case, the case of Milton¹ :—

The strength of his position is his lofty idealism, his magnificent conception of the institution he discusses, and his disdain for whatever degrades it to conventionality or mere expediency. Here he is impregnable and above criticism, but his handling of the more sublunary departments of the subject must be unsatisfactory to legislators, who have usually deemed his sublime idealism fitter for the societies of the blest than for the imperfect communities of mankind. When his "doctrine and discipline" shall have been sanctioned by lawgivers, we may be sure that the world is already much better, or much worse.

So far as the controversy in his congregation was concerned, Fox had won a victory, and although the disappearance of so many familiar faces must have been as painful as the diminution of pecuniary resource and social influence was disadvantageous, the seceders for the most part belonged to that section whose conservatism had hitherto been a drag on his exertions. But he was now about to take a step which, though innocent in intention, fatally compromised him in the opinion of many good men. Upon the completion of the arrangements for his separation from Mrs Fox, who thenceforward received a fixed sum out of his precarious income, he migrated to Bayswater, then a country village, and when the new household was organised, Eliza Flower appeared at the head of it. This step unquestionably involved no blemish of personal purity. No reader of the letters of Eliza and her sister can have any doubt on this point : nor would a person of the independence and intrepidity of Eliza Flower have submitted to an ambiguous relation. She would have assumed his name, and declared herself his wife in the sight of

¹ *Life of John Milton*, by R. Garnett, pp. 90, 91.

Heaven. Her omission to do so ought to have convinced all who knew her of the true state of the case : and in fact it probably did : but, although no one really thought the worse of her, social conventions were irresistible. While the new friends whom Fox was gathering round him—Browning, Macready, Forster—rallied round her with every sign of regard, the old friends, with the exception of the Peter Taylors and their circle and the genial and generous Talfourd, shut their drawing-rooms against her. Eliza had Mary Shelley's and George Eliot's trials without their compensations. The situation must have been indescribably trying ; and not the less although in all her correspondence there is no symptom of flinching, of regret, of conceiving or wishing that things might be otherwise, of resentment against anyone, except a slight touch of soreness at what she deemed the inconsistency of Harriet Martineau :—

Miss Martineau's book ! [on America] you see what he [Fox] thinks of that, it is indeed a masterly work, but what a strange and to me depressing anarchy is that want of unity in principle and conduct. When the fear of the world is not upon her how sound and wise are her views ! and in this instance how courageously she speaks out ! thanks to her for this.

Fox must have foreseen the consequences to the weaker party, and can hardly be acquitted of selfishness. It is true that, to an affectionate nature like his, the temptation was almost irresistible. It is true that the most sympathetic man can but faintly understand the suffering of a sensitive woman in such conjunctures. It is true that he was himself a sharer in the resulting obloquy. It is true that all was in accordance with Eliza's own wish, and that, had Fox hesitated to accept her sacrifice, his considerateness would probably have been mistaken for coldness. With all this, it would be difficult to acquit him of failure to attain the height of disinterestedness demanded by the occasion,

but for one most important consideration, his children. What was to become of them? Their mother admitted her inability to manage them. The daughter, a girl of twelve, though by no means disowning her parent, was determined not to live with her. The deaf and dumb son, physically wrecked and mentally embittered by his calamity, required medicine for soul and body, which none but Eliza Flower could or would have administered. The younger son, Franklin, seems to have preferred his mother, with whom he usually resided, though we shall find him actively aiding and aided by his father. Eliza and Florance came under their father's roof, and there incurred obligations to Eliza Flower which they owned to the last moment of their lives.

The changes in Fox's religious position which his disownment by the Unitarian body was largely instrumental in effecting will be best treated in another place. They would probably have been less marked if James Martineau's ministry had been then exercised in London: and indeed it is difficult to measure the injury to English thought on the highest themes by the association of that first-class mind with an unpopular sect and its exile to a provincial city. Martineau's support, it will be seen, would not have been withheld from Fox even after Fox's crowning imprudence of his domestication with Eliza Flower. Had he lived in London he would have assisted in the services at South Place, and his countenance would have assuaged the resentment at, as he thought, ungenerous treatment, which estranged Fox more and more from Unitarianism. Martineau's enthusiastic encomium on Fox's essay on Belsham has been already cited, and he is coupled by Martineau's biographer with Dr Lant Carpenter as an object of Martineau's lasting "veneration."

LIVERPOOL,
May 30, 1835.

MY DEAR SIR,—A letter addressed by you to the Presbyterian Ministers in and about London has been put into my hands, from which it appears that a sentence of expulsion has been passed upon you by that body under circumstances of injustice which would be surprising even in the history of Synods. Such pains have been taken by these gentlemen to impress you with a contempt for the opinion of the Unitarian ministry that I almost hesitate to trouble you with any explanation of the feelings with which I regard the late proceedings in Finsbury Chapel. But of however little worth my opinion may be to you, it is right that this discreditable conclave should not be supposed to speak the sentiments of any class which they may pretend to represent; that provincial ministers of that class should protect themselves from the imputation of sympathy with the acts of this nature perpetrated “in and about London”; and express to you their sorrow and indignation at seeing a spirit of insult towards yourself manifesting itself under the guise of a zeal for Christian morality;—a disguise which is more effectual in deceiving the agents themselves in this transaction, than its spectators. That these gentlemen are very sincere and conscientious I do not doubt, but this appears to me to be that kind of conscientiousness, (more “respectable” than worthy of respect) which can indulge very bad feelings in the professed persuasion that they are exceedingly good.

In saying this, I do not pretend to be influenced by sympathy with your obnoxious opinions on the subject of marriage, or by an admiration of that peculiar and delicate relation of which these opinions have been either the cause, or (is it not possible?) the effect. I am not called upon by any new obligation to repeat what I formerly said to you, I believe, without reserve, that your doctrine on the above-mentioned subjects, and, of course, the conduct which it prescribes, do appear to me to be ethically unsound, and, like all errors, especially in moral questions, mischievous. But then I do not affect to feel any greater uneasiness on this matter than I did before the late excitement occasioned by it; except indeed that that excitement made me refer again to your published opinions, and revived and confirmed my dissent from them. In that dissent

I saw then, as I see now, no reason for withholding admiration and regard from talents and virtues eminently useful to mankind ; no reason for sanctioning a persecution, fruitless either of conversion to the persecuted or of instruction to others, and never applied to the aberrations often at least equally serious, of privileged respectability ; no reason even for urging on your attention an opinion which could claim regard only from a length and closeness of intimacy which it is not my happiness to have enjoyed. At the whole course of proceeding on the part of your accusers, beyond the mere act of secession, at the readiness with which calumnies were seized, and the pertinacity with which disclaimed accusations were repeated, at the malignant temper which appears in the protesters' papers, and the disposition more recently manifested by many of the London ministers, and others, I feel the most unmitigated disgust.

Though your desire is, I know, to maintain your congregation in independence of Unitarian connections, and though in London no other course is left to you, you will allow your contempt for the metropolitan section of Unitarianism to extend to all its congregations. I too keep very shy of Unitarianism—the sectarian thing bearing that name I despise—but I know of no sect of Dissenters but Unitarians from whom there is any hope of raising up a class of fearless investigators and earnest reformers in morals and religion. I hope then that you will not think it necessary perfectly to insulate yourself, and stand aloof, not only from insincere connection, but from sincere sympathy. There are classes of persons in this part of the country to whom I cannot but wish the pleasure of doing you full justice ; and as distance creates mystery and increases suspicion, can you not come into this neighbourhood for a visit. I see the difficulty of providing for your pulpit, but I suppose you are not prisoner there for ever ? I should rejoice to do anything to further an arrangement which may bring you here. Mrs Martineau desires her kind remembrances. Believe me, my dear Sir, Ever yours truly, JAMES MARTINEAU.

This impressive and impartial deliverance may fitly serve as epilogue to the history of Fox's domestic infelicities, which exercised too important an influence upon his public career to be consigned to the shroud which should, as a rule,

envelop the privacy of family life. They and their immediate consequences accelerated a transformation which had long been maturing, but might otherwise have been long delayed, metamorphosing the preacher into the lecturer, journalist, critic, and publicist who was for the next quarter of a century to be so conspicuous a figure in English public life.

CHAPTER VI

CRAVEN HILL—*The True Sun*—LITERARY INTIMACIES

COULD so straightforward a personage as Fox have been at any period of his life likened to a serpent, it would have been during the years 1834 to 1836, for then he was undeniably casting his skin. The sphere of his intimacies was not only enlarged but modified. The minister of religion became a secular citizen, and without abandoning his official ministrations, brought the pulpit many degrees nearer to the platform, and looked more and more to the periodical press as his most effective method of utterance. His own private pulpit, the *Repository*, was vacated, and the conspicuous editor merged himself in the ranks of anonymous journalism. There was an unanswerable reason for the transformation: the *Repository* did not pay, and the daily press did. But, apart from this consideration, the newspaper was more congenial to Fox than the magazine, gave him opportunities of expressing his views with more effect and frequency, and admitted of reference to a multitude of topics for which the monthly publication had no room, or which would have become out of date ere it could have treated them. Nevertheless,

'Tis well to be off with the old love
Before you are on with the new,

and Fox, bound to the *Repository*, had to pull for a while at the oar like the ferryman in the fairy tale, seeking for

someone to take it out of his hand.¹ Emancipation appeared at last in the person of Richard Hengist Horne, beginning to be distinguished as a dramatist and poet, but at the time best known as the author of *An Exposition of the false Medium between men of genius and the Public*—i.e. publishers and critics, and urging a national institution for enabling men of genius to dispense with such base auxiliaries. Horne, however, had no objection to criticism of the right, that is of the laudatory sort, and meeting with this at Fox's hands attached himself to the *Repository*, and became a leading contributor.

Perhaps the first clear indication that Fox was in quest of a wider sphere is a letter from Horne of 29th April 1835, to communicate the rumour that Daniel Whittle Harvey was about to purchase *The True Sun*. Fox was evidently on the lookout for such an opening, and upon the report being verified by the event he entered the ranks of professional journalism. The *Repository* languished; and on 10th February 1836 Horne writes that since Fox is likely to relinquish it, Horne ventures to propose that he should part with it to him and Miss Gillies, giving a guarantee against loss for the first three months, undertaking to write half a sheet for it monthly when called upon, and becoming entitled to an equal share with his coadjutors of all excess of profit over £20 a month. The precise terms of the transfer do not appear, but in June 1836 Horne is found writing about the arrangements he is making for the new number, the first to appear under his editorship. Fox seems to have promised to contribute regularly to the end of the year, but not to have always fulfilled his undertaking. In November 1836, Horne writes:—

The *Repository* labours of the month being just over, I have to say to you, most seriously, that you must not neglect it in

¹ In Edgar Taylor's version of Grimm, usually so accurate, *Ruder* is translated *rudder*, which, if the boat had one, could only have been handled by the passenger.

future. If you, yourself, do not contribute to it according to our agreement, I will certainly give it up, and with no further notice than according to our agreement. I am aware of your arduous work in other quarters, but what is to be done? We want you, we need you, and must have you. Nowhere else can the truth be so broadly and philosophically spoken, as in the *Repository*.

Fox wrote an article for the December number, but seems to have declined to continue his contributions, and Horne wrote at the end of the year :—

“I am truly grieved at this finish of our agreement—for finished it clearly is—and something fresh must be devised for the help of the *Repository*. I will do all I can to keep it up. I sincerely hope that my requisitions as to your articles have never been supposed to result from any mere notion of keeping you “up to the collar,” of an agreement, but really from necessity, no one else being able to supply your place and keep up the high political character of the *Repository*.

By 12th April 1837 Horne perceived the struggle to be hopeless, and wrote the letter from which an extract has already been given on the disadvantage to the *Repository* of its ancient Unitarian connection. He adds :—

I intend to lay down the bâton at the end of the half year, the number for June being my last. Private circumstances (mortgages, etc., which have alone enabled my wick to burn in an exclusive socket) would make me regret that we cannot stop at once. But this ought never to be. After all your past labours, and the labours of others, to sneak out of existence, or to drop like a pill into the maw of Time (however good a pill), would be as painful as unbecoming. We must have time to arrange the mantle and ascend with decency.

The ferryman, however, found yet another adventurer to take the oar from his hand—Leigh Hunt—under whose pilotage, though the chief item of cargo was the light and graceful commodity of blue stockings, it speedily subsided

into Styx, though not into Lethe. Before its disappearance it had complimented Fox by a striking and characteristic engraved portrait, after a drawing by Margaret Gillies. Its place as a Unitarian organ had long been taken by the *Christian Reformer*.

Daniel Whittle Harvey, under whose auspices Fox became a member of the fourth estate, M.P. for Southwark and formerly for Colchester, was one of the most finished and powerful orators in the Commons. He was the darling of the Essex Dissenters, who stood by him through good and evil report. Of the latter he had had an ample portion, the benchers of the Inns of Court having refused to call him to the Bar, on account of certain frauds imputed to him in his former quality of solicitor, nor did the unanimous acquittal by a committee of the House of Commons produce the slightest impression on those obdurate men. The truth can hardly be ascertained at this day : but it deserves to be remembered that he subsequently filled the office of Commissioner of City Police with high credit for more than twenty years, and retained through life the friendship of one whose good word went far, James Martineau. At this period he was proprietor of *The Sunday Times*, in which Fox wrote, and was meditating the purchase of *The True Sun*, which had become his property by 1st July 1835, when it appeared with a political programme and an address apologising for the crooked eclipses which, in the shape of pecuniary embarrassments, had incessantly fought against its glory since its establishment in 1831, but promising that it shall now "roll forth upon a cloudless and undeviating course." Fox was the principal leader writer ; in the heading, indeed, of one of the unwritten chapters for his intended autobiography, he describes himself as editor. His spirited articles, "blisters for the aristocracy," Cobden called them, soon wrote the paper up into a daily circulation of fifteen thousand copies.

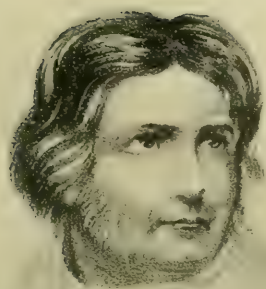
In January 1835 Fox, craving a new scene for the new life, had removed from Dalston to 5 Craven Hill, Bayswater, which his daughter, then eleven years old, was able to recollect as a rustic village, and her abode as "a pretty cottage behind a row of sweet scented limes." White cows browsed in the meadows that lay between Craven Hill and Kensington Gardens, "and we could, and often did, walk by fields and lanes the whole way to Hampstead Heath, and gather primroses by the way." "I am," wrote Fox to his mother in March, "quite well and happy, and several years younger this last birthday than I was the one before." We obtain attractive glimpses of his strenuous life between Craven Hill and the Strand from the best of all reporters, the brave, pure and devoted Eliza Flower, who had disregarded the world's opinion by taking up her residence with him from the first. His aged mother, who cordially approved of all his proceedings and arrangements, visited him in the summer, and Eliza Flower returned with her to Norwich. A warm friendship sprang up between Eliza and Fox's sister Sarah, commonly called "Sadie," who must have been a very lovable person, and to her Eliza's letters descriptive of life at Craven Hill are addressed :—

CRAVEN HILL.

[1836]

We have had quite a change in our arrangements—look ye—Breakfast before eight ! before nine he is off to town and does not come back till four,¹ hard at work all the time, "and what about ?" look in the "True Sun Newspaper" and that will soon tell you. The leading articles, besides here and there a touch of his hand, and the whole face of paper has changed already, say they, who do not as yet indentify the hand but who are struck with the improvement of the paper. When he entered into this engagement I had my fears that his health would not stand the day after day of the same kind of hard labour, and

¹ *The True Sun* went to press at half-past two.



W. J. Fox

W. J. FOX IN 1836
After the drawing by Margaret Gillies

that so much of politics would interfere with other and still more important subjects, and then he *was* so very well and in such spirits, getting through so much and so easily, it was all so happy, that I feared, keeping my fears to myself as I saw it must be, and throwing every atom of hope I could muster out of my great content, wanted to let well alone ; and my fears were groundless. It is all working well : beautifully : Can't you fancy his coming back on the first day, and (changing his coat for his dressing-gown) saying, "There, I feel like an honest man who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow." It fagged him a good deal though for the first week or two, when he had still *The Sunday Times* on his hands, but he makes light of it now ! and I really think is not more tired with the extra exertion of getting to the Strand and back again than if he had been at work in his quiet study.

March, 1837.

Do you like it ?—And now I'll tell you of what he is doing. On Tuesday he is preaching a course of lectures on the Reformers, from Abraham, Moses, the old prophets and Greek philosophers—up to Christ and His Apostles, then to Mahomet, Wycliffe, Luther, Knox, and then to those of our own age. I think they are the finest things he ever did, and I wonder how often I've said so before. But in the week the newspaper is the grand object. He goes every morning at half past eight, and works hard till half past two or three, sometimes later—the leading articles besides literature and drama, the criticism, with an additional one for the Sunday paper, is his department. When the paper was first bought, its circulation had dwindled down to about 2000 on the Sunday and less on the daily. They have printed fifteen thousand of the former and could have sold more, and it has got up to 7000 in the daily. Accounts of the effect it is producing, especially on the operatives, swarm in from all quarters ; and I have little doubt it will soon be indeed that which it entitles itself—the people's paper. Next Sunday they mean to print and expect to sell 30,000. This of course is a great exertion to him, but at present I think his health has benefited rather than suffered in consequence, which may partly be ascribed to the fact of his taking more exercise and the absence from all mental vexations of any kind whatsoever.

Another letter gives a charmingly idyllic interior of the humble household at Norwich :—

O but when I am in my snug out-of-the-world corner here, with nothing but the trees and the sky, and the work of the hour is over, I do love to sit, I, memory, and fancy, to sit and talk together, but then they are the chief speakers, and that's the sweetness of it ; or they show me pictures and old scenes, or they take me to the sea-shore to gather the wild flowers over and over again and again, or to the green meadows by the shady lanes which encircle an old farm house, or to some nice little cosy room where the sofa stands opposite a wee bit of bright garden, and a sweet pale face with the close white cap, and the kerchief folded over the slight, but slightly drooping figure sits reading a newspaper by a little round table and not stopping though a fourth has just slid into the room and between the two that were listening side by side. O I am nearer than you think, dear Sadi, at such times ; it is reality, and if I don't want to go and open my desk and begin at a distance, at such a distance as the very act of writing throws on me at once. Ah, you smile, but don't think I am defending myself. Then the newspaper, that is communication with you : every day you may almost know of our doings and thinkings, and certainly of our talkings.

Eliza's account of Fox's labours on *The True Sun* is confirmed by a characteristic letter from him to his mother :—

March 1, 1837.

DEAR MOTHER,—I have little more time than just to write my love to you all, and God bless you ; but I must just let you know that from me to-day in my own hand. For, as Flory says, " Please to remember that this is my birthday ! " It seems an extraordinary thing that even this mark on the inside of my hand is half a century old. The warming pan scar is quite fresh yet. I have had scars since that have worn out faster. Dear Mother, I think you and I have left off growing older ; at least I do not feel it, and everybody says that you do not show it. How many of our old acquaintances are

shaken down ! P. Youngman was here this morning and told me of his brother's death, just as I had heard of Mr Perry's. I trust we are both ready for our own time whenever it may come, and as Mrs Barbauld says :—" Still pleased to stay, yet not afraid to go."

You have stood this trying winter bravely, and as for me my health seems all the better for fatigues and occupations the half of which would have knocked me up a few years ago. We have indeed reason to bless a kind Providence. I write this at office, but I suppose Lizzie's letter to Sarah tells all about the children, and now, dear Mother, farewell, and again, God bless you all.

Yours affectionately,

W. J. Fox.

In a letter dated 13th November 1837, Fox says :—

We had a grand sight here [the Strand] of the little Queen hereon Thursday (Lord Mayor's Day) and a bit of the neighbouring illuminations at night, as Tottie was born after illuminations were out of fashion. But we could not venture far into the crowd, which in places was very awful. The little girl (Victoria I mean) ought to turn out very good, for she is certainly made much of.

The general life of the little household at Craven Hill, with its frank affections, industry directed to high aims, simple enjoyments and chequering cares, is so well depicted in a letter from Eliza Flower of 14th June 1837, that is too long to quote.

For some time there was a grievous skeleton in the house in the affliction of Florance, the deaf and dumb boy, which, as not unfrequently the case, appeared to taint and warp the sufferer's moral nature. On 28th September 1836 Eliza had thus poured forth her grief and despondency to Sarah Fox :—

I could take you into my anxiety about Florry—whom I am far from satisfied with, and know not how to deal with. The fact is, I have never lived with anyone who was anything approaching to his nature—and the mode which I should think

judicious to any other being would probably have the worst effect on him. I suppose at school, the only way of acting upon him (to counteract or control him) was by physical force. He seems to me to need moral training and discipline (though of the kindest kind) more than any being I ever met with. I wish I could talk to you and tell you all my difficulties about him, and of the best way of proceeding—though I am not sure whether, however good the plan, I could do anything to effect it, and that makes me low-spirited sometimes.

Fox must have been reminded of his tuition of Mary Franklin. But Eliza's devotion was not thrown away. By 22nd May 1837 she was able to report a favourable change.

The improvement was permanent. Within a few years Florance, who neither wanted good disposition nor natural ability, was creditably filling a post in the Registrar General's office.

But the time was arriving when the British public could no longer say with Pentheus: ὀρᾶν μιν δὴ οὐκ ἡλίους δόκω. At the end of 1837 *The True Sun*, a meteorite projected from the original *Sun* (the antecedent luminary having gone on all the time calmly dispensing a feeble radiance, once blazing into effulgence when it printed a Coronation Number in letters of gold), was unexpectedly discontinued, leaving its rival free to occupy as much of the vespertine firmament as *The Standard* and *The Globe* would allow. The reason was no doubt financial. The successful establishment of a daily journal might well for a while tax the resources of the proprietor, and Whittle Harvey was neither able nor willing to regulate his personal expenditure. The paper flickered on as a *weekly* True Sun until the end of 1839, when by weekly succession its weakly condition was past all expression, and it was extinguished by the sudden conversion of a patriot into a policeman. Fox says in an obituary notice of Harvey (1863), anonymous, but evidently from his pen:—

Daniel Whittle Harvey was a singular instance of a man who had got out of his sphere, and missed the road to a shining fame. What business had he as a Commissioner of Police ? All who ever heard him attempting to please, convince, or excite a miscellaneous audience, must have felt that he was an orator born. He had the divine afflatus which as truly distinguishes the native orator as the poet, the prophet, or the artist. The tones of his voice, his air, the very movements of his limbs were eloquent. He could thrill you in his best days by reading the alphabet. He should have kept in the thick of public men and public affairs. He should have been as independent as Marvell and as incorruptible as Hume, and he would have been the foremost politician of his time.

It is pleasant to find one great orator thus eulogising another, even when that other had been a man of words rather than of deeds. The discontinuance of the daily *True Sun* is thus reported by Fox in letters to his mother :—

BAYSWATER,
Dec. 29, 1837.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I just write for Charles's parcel, to wish you all a happy ending of the old year and beginning of the new one. It has been a very happy old year to me, though with more of hard work and confinement all through than I could have wished, and with some annoyance just now at the sudden extinction of *The True Sun*. If a new paper, and one not so dependent upon an individual as that was upon Mr Harvey, be not soon started, I shall take advantage of my liberty to see you all before many weeks are over. But though I shall not be inclined to continue with the *Weekly True Sun*, now the daily is sold, yet I shall not hold back from any honourable post that may be offered me to contend against this second *American War*.¹ For it is really just the same thing doing over again that was done when you were a girl ; and I hope with a similar ending.

The sudden stoppage of my weekly supplies, by the sale of

¹ An allusion to the troubles in Lower Canada. Lord Durham's mission had not yet been announced.

the paper, prevents my sending the money for Frank's clothes by the parcel ; but I will send it in a very few days.

I think Frank had better come back with Mrs Ormsby. I hope he has been good upon the whole, and that you have enjoyed his visitation. Tell him I will give him a full account of *Billy Rush* some day after he returns.

The Proprietor of the *Sun*, (Mr Murdo Young), who purchased *The True Sun*, offered me the same post in it, if I would subject my writing to his supervision and keep myself civil about ministers. So I ended that negotiation in very few minutes.

You see I am almost writing a political article, according to my daily custom, when I meant to hope you enjoyed this very mild and beautiful weather, and to say God bless you all for the coming New Year, and many years after.

Yours affectionately,

W. J. Fox.

BAYSWATER,

February 28, 1838.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Although *The True Sun* did not keep on, the articles in it seem to have drawn considerable attention, and I have had sundry offers from different newspapers. None of the daily papers, however, are radical enough for me at present ; so I am only writing literary and dramatic notices in *The Morning Chronicle*, for which they pay me very handsomely. I hope to have no occasion for any engagements that will interfere with my seeing you all in the Midsummer holidays. Another consequence of the writing in *The True Sun* is that I expect to be able to get Flory, as soon as he is old enough, an appointment in some of the public offices as a clerk. I could have it directly for him, without compromising any principle or asking any favour, if he were but two years older. And tho' the salary would be low, yet he would be secure *for life*, which would be in his case a most satisfactory consideration. The difficulty now is to find how best to employ him in the meantime. He is very anxious to be doing some work and earning some money.

God bless you, dear Mother—with best love to all.

Your affectionate son,

W. J. Fox.

Fox, meanwhile, had not been entirely divorced from literature of a higher class than newspaper leader writing.

Of his lectures at Finsbury Chapel we shall speak in another place. If he did not contribute largely to the *London and Westminster* it was not from want of solicitation from Mill, who set the highest value on his co-operation : but it was difficult to reconcile Mill's wishes either with the exigencies of the domestic exchequer or with the exigencies of journalism. Sundry political differences, moreover, existed. Fox was a Radical, but not a Philosophical Radical :—

INDIA HOUSE,
Tuesday.

You know that Molesworth has bought the *Westminster* and that it is united with the *London* ? That gives us a better chance of success. I should hope a very good one—but which depends entirely on our being able to make the combined review a striking one. I know that you do not like *The London Review*, and I do not know how it is possible you should, still I hope you do not dislike it so much as to be unwilling to write in it. Do not suppose that any article of yours would have the fate of Horne's. There is nothing to induce one to put in his articles unless one completely agrees with them, but such articles as many of yours would be desirable for the Review even if one differed from every word of them. I should differ from them occasionally, but not nearly so much as I differ in a contrary way from many which I am obliged to put in now, and I am the more desirous to throw something into the other scale.

You know, I suppose, that you are put upon the list of the Reform Club as an original member.

How striking some of your lectures must have been to hear ! I admire them exceedingly. It is a pity that the first two, from the comparative triteness of the subject, have less in them than the rest.

J. S. M.

[January, 1837.]

I hope our Poor Law offences have not made it hopeless to induce you to write for us a notice of Bulwer's play ;¹ no one but you can do it in the only way in which it ought to be done,

¹ *The Duchess de La Vallière.*

that of setting the stage in its proper position of worthiness, and encouraging the best writers to write for it. Bulwer wishes that we should notice it, because he is rather more sore than need be at the newspaper attacks, and thinks his play needs support against them. If it *can* need support against such attacks it should have it. You, I believe, think highly of the play, and if so there would be nothing to guard against, except that we should not seem to be paying him in puffs for an article of his which we shall probably have in this very same number, and that we should not seem to sanction as much as is merely conventional in the morality of that La Vallière story; but this is a point on which it is quite unnecessary to say anything to you.

You have no conception how much you would oblige me if you could manage to do it, though I know well what it is to ask for more work from an overworked person. J. S. M.

18 KENSINGTON SQUARE.

[January, 1837.]

I feel the position you are in with regard to Horne, and all the rest of what you say on that subject I feel to my cost too. What to do I do not know. There is not a creature living who would do that for me, and whom I could trust to unless it be you. Is there no remedy? Could I in any way forward it? Is there anything I could do for your paper that would give you a few hours respite from it? Is there no hope?

I put "our" to the "poor law offences" because it would be cowardly not, since I am as much responsible for them as any one can be. I hope you believe without my saying it that I should not have put the article in if it had then appeared to me as it does to you personally disrespectful to yourself, and that not because you are a contributor, but because you are *you*. The two between whom you are placed may be "thieves,"¹

¹ The article was "Poor Law Fallacies" (*London and Westminster Review*, October 1836). The "thieves," were *The London Dispatch* and *The Weekly Dispatch*, to the latter of which Fox himself was destined to be an extensive contributor. If he saw anything offensive in the article, he was much too sensitive. The writer was W. E. Hickson, afterwards editor and proprietor of the *Review*, a pioneer in popular education and a sound thinker on industrial questions. Portions of the essay, describing from personal experience the failure of endeavours to organise labour on a non-commercial basis, have much value, and might be advantageously reprinted at the present day.

I do not know them, and if so it is natural you should feel offended, but I am persuaded the writer of the article does not think them such, has a good opinion of at least the intentions of both. Neither did it seem to me that *The True Sun* was spoken of disparagingly upon the whole, though a difference of opinion was expressed with much warmth on a particular point.

I differ from you as entirely as the writer does on the Poor Law question, and on a whole class of questions therewith connected. Nor have your articles in answer to the Review, though I recognise in them your best and most effective style of discussion, at all narrowed the difference between us, but rather widened it. But I hope there is no reason against letting this be an open question both among Radicals and among London Reviewers.

J. S. M.

18 KENSINGTON SQUARE.

[Postmark, *March 15, 1837.*]

Thanks; it is beautifully done, and will illuminate our number. I would gladly, whenever possible, give many articles to T[rue] S[un] for such another.

Probably the Cromwell extracts, with such comment as they need, may be added at the end without altering anything. At all events the alteration can be made in the proof.

Thanks once more. I feel them and all the more because I have given you so little to thank me for.

J. S. M.

It would seem, then, that Mill's suggestion had been carried out, and that he had liberated Fox for the *London and Westminster* by himself writing leaders for *The True Sun*. "So the eyes were the feet, and the feet were the eyes." The review of Bulwer's play appeared in the April number, and deserves Mill's praise, doing justice to its real beauties, while pointing out that the morality was not very moral, and that the catastrophe of the heroine's taking the veil irritated instead of satisfying a Protestant audience. The *Cromwell* mentioned by Mill, copious extracts from which are given, was a privately printed play of

Bulwer's, intended as the first member of a trilogy. It does not appear to have been published. Fox must have been well acquainted with Bulwer, whom Eliza Flower, hearing him speak at a public meeting, liked better in his works than in his person :—" A graceful, gracious, almost lady-like gentleman ; but how ever could that fair-haired, pale-faced, pink-eyelided, gold-chained *preux chevalier* have painted Paul Clifford or felt as Eugene Aram ? " The mystic eloquence of *Zanoni* was entirely congenial to her.

Had Fox been able to contribute to the *Westminster* under Mill's management, the connection would have borne excellent fruit both literary and personal, but he was enmeshed in the machinery of the daily press, and by the time that he was liberated Mill had made over the main direction of the *Review* to his assistant Robertson, and soon afterwards relinquished it altogether. The sympathetic bond that had united the two men had meanwhile been naturally dissolved by the reconstruction of Fox's domestic life and Mill's attainment of a *modus vivendi* with the object of his worship and her environment. Neither loved letter-writing for letter-writing's sake, and the correspondence given above is the last, so far as appears, that passed between them. But there was no estrangement. " Mrs John Taylor," Eliza Flower writes to her sister in November 1839, from Queen Square, Westminster, " has been and gone. She did not know we were here till yesterday. She was very sweet and tender, and looked at me with eyes full of real love."

Another gifted woman was about this time attracted to, without actually entering, Fox's sphere. Among his most honourable titles to remembrance is his championship, when such championship was uncommon, of woman considered as the victim of conventional restrictions and inequitable legislation. His efforts in this direction attracted the attention of Caroline Norton, then fighting

the battle of her sex against male humanity in general and her husband in particular. She sends Fox a pamphlet she has printed privately, and consults him as to the expediency of publication :—

MAIDEN BRADLEY, WILTS.

January 11th, 1837.

DEAR SIR,—I have been intending to write to you for nearly a fortnight, but have suffered so severely from rheumatism in the head and pain in my eyes that I have delayed from day to day. I have written a pamphlet on the subject of maternal claims, illustrated by six cases of hardship, and peculiar injustice, five of which are from the legal reports, and the sixth is my own. In the latter statement I have adhered as much as possible to the subject of my tract : namely the cruel exercise of the common law right of the Father, and I have not touched upon the subject of the law of Divorce—not only from a natural dislike to trench on that ground, but from the earnest and sincere hope that the injustice, and inefficacy (for the purposes of moral right) of the present method of proceeding, may be argued by a more eloquent pen and one possessed of more vigour than my own.

This pamphlet has occupied all the leisure which depression of spirits and pain have left me :—I am about to print it,—for private circulation at first, not having made up my mind whether to listen to the friends who urge me to publish it, or to the friends who urge me to remain passive ; the latter is not in my nature, I have therefore adopted a middle course—When I send it to you, which I hope to do in a week or ten days, I trust you will give your voice one way or the other, and it will depend on the opinions given by my friends on perusal whether I shall endeavour to publish it regularly. I look forward with an anxious and restless expectation to your finding leisure to treat the subject generally. The style of eloquence at present the fashion, is too cold to attract, too theoretical to be easily comprehended—we want someone who will write naturally—who will wrestle with established prejudices in the wrestler's dress, and not in the robes of a senator or the armour of a knight—someone who will speak to the people their own language, the language of feeling, and of the intelligence which is born of

feeling—we want someone who will free the giant form of Truth from the million of slender cords that bind her down, (like Gulliver in Lilliput) and lift her up, erect and mighty, among those who laughed her strength to scorn because for a while that strength lay prostrate. I am well assured that you will not think I use a phrase of flattery when I say that from you I would expect this eloquence—one of the gifts of genius is to feel what one is worth, and what one has superior to the generality of men. There is a certain tone of argument which produces a vibration of response in the heart, as there is a sound to thrill a musical instrument—the secret is to find that tone; and few—very few—find it.

I shall hope to hear from you when you have looked through my tract and that you will assist me with any hint which may occur to you. I read with great pleasure, the very flattering review of my little poem in *The True Sun*, and thank you for it. I have been told that “it is a subject of so little general interest that I could hardly expect it to have much success.” Can anything show more the *hardness* of mind of the many, than this sentence, *if* it were true?—but I for one, do not believe it. I believe it to be a subject of great and engrossing interest, and if it is not, it *ought* to be.

I will not further intrude on you at this moment, the more especially as the pain in my head confuses me after a while: and your time is so much occupied, that it must require great patience to go through one of my long egoistical letters. Meanwhile I beg you to believe me, dear Sir, Yours most truly,

CAROLINE NORTON.

The pamphlet was not published. It is a testimony to Mrs Norton's influence upon Fox that he made Lord Melbourne an exception to his general disesteem for Cabinet Ministers of whatever party. He wrote in the *Repository* for July 1836:—

Not until the House of Commons is much more entirely identified with the people; perhaps not until the people themselves are more enlightened and principled, can we expect to see a better man at the head of affairs. He deserves to be a Radical, for he feels and acts like a man, although he is a Whig Lord.

While Fox was thus making new friends, he was undergoing the pain of severance, though not precisely estrangement, from an old ally. Harriet Martineau did not take the same view of his case as her brother, who, expressing his complete dissent from his opinions, saw no ground for separation either in these or in the action that resulted from them. When his matrimonial troubles became notorious, Miss Martineau was on the point of sailing for America. She found time, nevertheless, to make a descent upon Upper Clapton, and convince herself of Eliza Flower's entire innocence in so far as external conduct went :

Lizzie has done what was due to my friendship for her and told me all. You are aware that I must be more grieved than surprised. You know too what my opinion has been throughout, and you know me. What follows? That, no change having taken place in either of you, my respect and friendship are precisely what they were before.

This declaration was unquestionably sincere, but before her return from the United States (August 1836) changes had taken place in the external relations of Fox and Eliza Flower, which entitled Miss Martineau to modify her attitude, if she thought fit. Fox must have known that she had revised it, for although, as we have seen, he greeted her book on America with enthusiasm he took no steps to renew her acquaintance until the receipt, early in 1838, of a letter from her requesting information upon a public matter, when, noting that the language of the letter was that of ancient regard, he added :—

The language of your great work [*Society and Manners in America*] is that of the paramount worth of thorough sincerity, and the right of all to act upon their own principles. And yet, towards myself, and that purest and noblest of beings with whom I am identified, and whom you recognise as such, your position is one of practical condemnation. I do not blame or remonstrate with you about this. I seek or desire no explana-

tion or discussion. I only mention it to you, that it is an incongruity in my eyes, because thereby a restraint is laid upon my pen which may seem unfriendly or discourteous, and which yours does not appear to feel. Had we been strangers, and the tone of your publications less above the average morality of the day, the case would have been very different.

Miss Martineau replies, maintaining her ground : her affection for Fox is unimpaired, her gratitude to him as her chief benefactor no less than of old, but she feels it her duty to mark her disapprobation of his domestic arrangements by a resolute refusal of private intercourse. Other letters followed on both sides, but Miss Martineau's are unavailable for publication, and it would be unfair to quote Fox's only. Each continued fully persuaded in their own minds, and the convictions of both were indisputably sincere. Miss Martineau, however, cannot help betraying an old grudge which may have influenced her more than she knew, and which she puts into the invidious form of attributing to Fox "a change of feeling as soon as my success became great." She adduces no evidence in support of this allegation except his having advised her against any connection with Brougham, lest she should become a tool of the Whig aristocracy ; and her admission in her autobiography of the soundness of the advice implies a retractation of the charge. The vitality of the wounded friendship was nevertheless evinced by its survival. After a few years the correspondence was resumed, and though Miss Martineau never again saw Eliza Flower, or Fox till after Eliza's death, it was continued with increasing cordiality until an advanced period of Fox's life, a strong testimony to the worth and magnanimity of both parties.

Of the society which gathered round Fox and Eliza Flower at Craven Hill we have glimpses in the reminiscences of Mrs Bridell Fox and W. J. Linton, who mention in particular Southwood Smith ; the charming and gifted

sisters, Mary and Margaret Gillies ; and the poets Horne and Wade. The impression of all these together, nevertheless, was feeble in comparison with that produced by the Flower sisters :—

With their love and feeling for music and pictorial art, and their high poetic thought, they were such women in their purity, intelligence, and high-souled enthusiasm as Shelley might have sung as fitted to redeem a world by their very presence.

No friend, perhaps, was so thoroughly congenial to Fox as Macready, but their intercourse chiefly took place in town, and will be best reserved for a chapter on Fox's connection with the drama. The distance of Craven Hill from London, as London then was, formed a great hindrance to social meetings :

I had [says Mrs Bridell Fox] no youthful companions. My dear father must have felt this, for whenever he had an off-day from the newspaper, or could get home early, he would himself become my playfellow, and trap and ball and bows and arrows were instituted in the long untidy garden.

Mrs Bridell Fox, however, remembers visits from Leigh Hunt, and also “ the loss of the first MS. volume of Carlyle's French Revolution, and Mr Mill's terrible dismay at having to tell the author what had happened.” The personal intercourse between Carlyle and Fox must have been slight. Carlyle had in general an insuperable antipathy to anyone appearing ever so little in the guise of a Socratic teacher, barely making an exception in the case of Emerson. Fox, on his part, while admiring Carlyle's genius, deplored his “ very bounded and far from encouraging view of the progress and tendencies of human nature,” and thought that *The French Revolution* should have had an epilogue : “ The narrative of the outward facts of struggle might have stopped where it does ; but there

remained to tell what the French Revolution is in the daily intellectual, political and moral condition of every living human being throughout the old and new world." *Sartor Resartus* commended itself more to Fox and his circle. "There are," wrote Sarah Flower Adams, "some spiritualisms in it, strong-winged, that fly us upward at once out of all the earthy thrall in which our feet will sometimes become entangled, try as we will to stretch beyond it." One famous passage was versified as a hymn for Finsbury Chapel, uncertain whether by Mrs Adams or Fox, but admirably :—

Though wandering in a stranger land,
 Though on the waste no altar stand,
 Take comfort, thou art not alone
 While Faith hath marked thee for her own.

Would'st thou a temple ! look above :
 The heavens stretch over all in love.
 A book ? for thine evangel scan
 The wondrous history of man.

The holy band of saints renowned
 Embrace thee, brother-like, around.
 Their sufferings and their triumphs rise
 In hymns immortal to the skies.

And though no organ there be heard,
 In harmony the winds are stirred ;
 And there the morning stars upraise
 Their ancient songs of deathless praise.

Meanwhile another man of letters of the first distinction, though as yet unrecognised as such save by Fox and his intimate circle, was hovering about Craven Hill, and thus presented himself to Miss Fox, who does not, however, say that it was their first meeting, as Mrs Sutherland Orr makes her say !—

As my memory glances back, another bright moment stands out clear like a sunlit spot through the long misty years. I was sitting drawing steadily at a sunlit window, and puffs of scent of eglantine floating as I drew. I was copying Retzsch's design of the young knight surrounded by Undines who try to draw him down into the waves, when Mr Robert Browning entered the room suddenly. On hearing that everybody was out except myself, he said, "I'll wait till they come in. It's my birthday to-day. I'm just twenty one. Shall I disturb you if I play a bit?" And as he sat down to the piano the bells of some neighbouring church burst out with a frantic and a merry peal. It seemed to my childish fancy as if in response to his remark that he was of age.

The remark, however, cannot have been made, for Browning came of age on 7th May 1833, when Eliza Fox was not of an age to be copying Retzsch's drawings. If Mrs Bridell Fox is correct in stating that Browning had lately returned from Venice, the date must be 7th May 1839. She continues: "He was then slim and dark and very handsome." Such was substantially the opinion of Sarah Flower, who wrote of Browning to her cousin Celina in 1833: "He is very interesting from his great power of conversation and thorough originality, to say nothing of his personal appearance, which would be unexceptionably poetical if Nature had not played him an ugly trick in giving him an ugly nose." [The nose in Browning's early portraits certainly does approximate to the Jewish type, but in the latter appears Christianised.]

Fox on his part gave Browning substantial aid, not merely by reviewing him, but by an introduction to Macready, which in due time procured him a commission to write *Strafford*, and brought him the friendship of Forster, who had not waited for personal acquaintance to write the review in *The Examiner* which, classed as Browning might yet for a season continue be to among "the great unread," made it impossible to ignore him. Fox's own review in the *Repository* was more remarkable

for ample and judicious quotation than for critical analysis; but Browning no doubt considered quotation, next after imitation, the sincerest form of flattery.

Eliza Flower did not invariably harmonise with the adult Browning. In one of her letters to Miss Bromley she says that she had begun admiring him again, "but he has twisted the old-young shoot off by the neck," by undue self-appreciation as it would seem. In another letter she remarks, "If he had not got the habit of talking of head and heart as two independent existences, one would say he was born without a heart." This surprises, until we compare Mrs Sutherland Orr on Browning at this time: "Except in its poetic sense, his emotional nature was then by no means in the ascendant" (p. 93). And, sure enough, a few pages further on, he is discovered asking Miss Haworth to explain what a thorough self-forgetting devotion may be—he who was afterwards to depict it so often in such masterly fashion! He evidently learned much from Elizabeth Browning, he might also have learned something from Eliza Flower; but it is evident from his note to her about *Pippa Passes* (Mrs Orr, p. 110) that her criticisms, like the interruptions of Coleridge's monologues, were regarded as "well-meant superfluities which would never do." She thus unbosoms herself to her friend, Miss Bromley:—

I send you *Bells and Pomegranates*, not because you will like the thing any more than I do, but because you won't like it less than I do. It is just like *his way*. This time he has got an exquisite subject, most exquisite, and it seemed so easy for a poet to handle. Yet here comes one of those fatal ifs, the egoism of the man, and the pity of it. He cannot metempsychose with his creatures, they are so many Robert Brownings. Still there are superb parts, the very last is quite lovely. But *puppets*, what a false word to use, as if God worked by puppets as well as Robert Browning!

She marked the passage, nevertheless: and Browning

afterwards manifested his affectionate regard in a feeling letter, to be given in its place.

Some time before the publication of *Pippa Passes*, Eliza had been invoked on occasion of a temporary misunderstanding with Forster, the cause of which does not appear:—

MY DEAR FOX,—Ask Miss Flower this question for me. If friendly relations are to be resumed between myself and Browning, on whom, in her judgment, and taking into account my obvious motive in all that passed, rests the propriety of making the first advance? I think I know what her answer will be, but yet there will be much satisfaction in having it from herself. You had not seen her to speak of the matter yesterday before we met; and though, if I sought a man's judgment, I would never ask beyond your own, you will forgive the anxiety I have, in such a case as this, to be right in Miss Flower's opinion. Her "roman-nosed grandeur" is the only thing that mars my self-approving recollections of the foolish quarrel. Nevertheless, it was *not* grandeur.

I leave town to-night for a few days, and wish to be quite clear in conscience before I go. I have not heard from Browning. He waits, it is clear, till I break his "pet" for him. It would be mortifying to me if I were not justified in letting him continue to wait; but it would mortify me more to interrupt or suspend, by anything I could blame myself for hereafter, a friendship on which I placed no indifferent value.

I see a notice of Cromwell announced in the *London* and *Westminster*. Can it be Mill's? I pray not Robertson's. Know you anything of it?

Always and ever yours,

JOHN FORSTER.

The letter was sent by special messenger and endorsed "Wait," a proof that Eliza's opinion was really desired. The article on Cromwell *was* by Robertson, who had considerably relieved Carlyle of the burden of writing it.

Horne writes of Elizabeth Barrett with feeling, and of *Sordello* with laudable candour :—

2 GRAY'S INN SQUARE, GRAY'S INN,
April 6, 1840.

MY DEAR SIR,—Mary [Gillies] tells me you propose an exchange of "*Sordello*" for Miss E. B. Barrett's volume of Poems : but I can't avail myself of the mutual accommodation you kindly intend because my copy is a presentation from the lady. It is not, however, a *dear* book and in the other sense, probably not more than six or seven shillings. It is entitled, "*The Seraphim, and other Poems,*" Saunders and Otley. Truly you ought to read it, and Lizzie too. As to *Sordello*, I shall buy it in any case—for if we don't buy each other's unsaleable books, the Lord above he knows what a huge justification [sic] there must be in the public sty, if its inmates *en masse*, are equally insensible. You couldn't lend me *Sordello*, could you ? ahem ! Not but that I should buy the book all the same, you know.

Did Mary tell you of the present sad position of Miss Barrett ? She seems to be in the last stage of consumption : has scarcely been three times out of doors these last three years ; and is obliged to remain, either in bed or lying upon a sofa all the days—all the nights—which gives one a sense of something beyond, and though one could add and all [sic] the days and nights put together at once. She says to me in a note—alluding to her hope to be able to be brought to London once more for a few weeks in the summer—"But I hope many things (some of them impossible, and the brighter for that) lying here in prison with futurity cut down before my face. And therefore I try to make another for myself beyond—but, says my physician, if you want to go to London you must eat some more soup. And this is the way we descend."

But out of many notes, such passages as the above have only occurred twice. She always writes full of spirit, and often of fun ; but chiefly speaks of poetry in general, and of Plato in particular, whose writings she seems thoroughly to understand both in the spirit and letter. I have never seen her (she is now at Torquay) and probably never shall. She is like an Arabian Night's lady, shut up in a crystal rock, afar.

2 GRAY'S INN SQUARE, GRAY'S INN,
April 24, 1840.

MY DEAR SIR,—After the hearty and most satisfactory notice of the new edition of Schlegel in the *Statesman* it may seem the height of ingratitude and stupidity if the publishers of Gregory VII.¹ do not send a copy to the same quarter. Therefore this explanation. I have had but a small edition printed, and have directed the publishers not to send a single copy to any newspaper or any magazine of any kind (though to be sure, if they send an official who properly “points the toe” the pubs, are not directed to refuse the application). Moreover, (with the exception of two, who have assisted me in the arduous job of revising proofs) I have not sent copies even to private friends—being suddenly possessed with the notion that they were the last who should expect it with a class of literature so neglected by the public, and, besides, that if I gave this tragedy away before I had paid my print and paper bill, the printer and paper-man were thus made involuntary donors, with no thanks; and if said tradesmen were never paid, then they were robbed by my rascally liberality. I therefore give everybody the spirit and literature of the tragedy—which is all that at present is truly mine to give—the print and paper. The tragedy-craving universe must fork out.

“Who will, may buy Pope Gregory’s story bold.”²

As God’s my judge, I *have* bought Sordello; and, by the same transcendental witness, I have read steadily through Book I. and firmly believe that I understand almost everything in it, except the story; the connection of the sentences; the perking interrogations; the grammatical structure of most of the longer sentences; the showery aptitude of the historical pepper-box. One poem seems chiefly addressed to gulp-Gortonswill-Guthrie readers. But what pure diamonds of the first water are to be found in this confused setting! His genius is equal to his perversity—the pity of it is that the shades run so continually into each other. We cannot skip. The poem wants a second volume of unreadable notes, to make it quite perfect. What a waste of genius!—so far as I can judge from Book I. and about fifty dips in the devious whole.

¹ Horne’s tragedy.

² Parody of a line in *Sordello*.

Pray receive my explanation at the beginning of this note in your prettiest manner. Regard it in the light of a subscription hat from the trembling printer and paper merchant. Order six copies from six different booksellers, and "if thou lov'st me" do not give or lend one to a soul during the next twelvemonth.

And your explanator will never pay.

It is an admonition to authors to abstain from eccentric freaks that Horne, more than respectable in epic, drama, and ballad, is chiefly remembered by his publication of his *Orion* at a farthing. Could he complain if he was taken at his own valuation? We learn, nevertheless, from Mrs Bridell Fox, that two conditions were attached to this liberal offer; no one was to be eligible who asked for *Orion*; and no purchaser was to be allowed more than one copy; thus demolishing the excellent story of the boy and the penn'orth of epics. The *Statesman* mentioned in his letter was a weekly newspaper of the *Spectator* class carried on throughout 1840 by Whittle Harvey, an afterglow of the defunct *Weekly True Sun* as that had been of the daily. In it Fox reviewed several books which had interested him, such as Carlyle's *Chartism*, Shelley's prose works, and the future Emperor's *Idées Napoléoniennes*. His reviews are always entertaining, but his discourse is in general confined to the points specially attractive to himself. His criticism is often pungent. He tells Channing that "he catechises Napoleon as if he were a candidate for admission to the communion of the First Presbyterian Church of Boston, U.S., and sends him back rejected from the table of the Lord." Of two volumes of the *Memoirs of Malibran*, unequally coupled together, he says, "The best illustration to be derived from the second volume is to put it on the fire and read the first by its blaze."

Fox's connection with *The True Sun* introduced him to John Forster, its then dramatic critic, who, if not his most congenial friend, speedily became his most intimate ally. As evinced in the cases of Dickens and Landor,

Forster had a wonderful gift for making himself indispensable to his friends, and no shadow would have rested upon the union if the destiny that made him their factotum had not also made him their biographer. On Fox, fortunately for both, he never tried his hand, and the history of their intimacy is mainly one of harmonious co-operation, especially in the spheres of journalism and the drama. This must be reserved for other sections of this narrative, but it may be mentioned here that in the early days of their acquaintance Fox and Forster occasionally exchanged their journalistic pulpits, Fox holding forth in *The Examiner* and Forster in *The True Sun*. A fine letter from Fox to Forster shows that Friendship, as well as Love, may have its transports and extravagances. The reader who begins by speculating whether "the grand and beautiful book," more than a match for Sandown Bay in its sublimest moods, is *The French Revolution* or *Sartor Resartus* will be disenchanted to find it no more and no less than Forster's *Statesmen of the Commonwealth* :—

It came at last, the book, the grand and beautiful book—and it stood the test of Sandown Bay, which is a rare thing indeed for a book to do. Many a great name is little there, and many a fascinating volume becomes unreadable. But there, in the presence, not of cliffs and billows, but of cliff and billow, amid grand elemental abstractions and in utter solitude, the book held itself proudly and claimed the affinity of eternal truth and essential beauty, telling us of human collisions, what would bear to be read where there was nobody but God.

Did you ever domicile in the middle of a tremendous high tide, with five miles of abrupt and stately cliffery on each hand, infinite sea in front, and on the broad sands of that long arc (when the waters ebb) often not a single footprint except our own? If ever you do, mind what books you take—we saw the waves splash up their scorn at a crumbly brown rock that yet had looked very firm and been called eternal by all cockneys, and tear it about, and go over its head into the fields, and when they retired they bore off its colours blending the trophy with their

own white crests. That's the way they serve the books we bring. A great mass, not only of cliff but of Shelley, was washed away in those high tides.

That "bleak and lonely Sandown Bay" (thank God for the same) has hitherto escaped the tourists and builders. As for the famous Isle of Wight scenery, pray send Mr Willmot down to Undercliff directly with full powers to reform. The rocks there all "come on as witches," but every one of them in "rouge and ringlets."

We are at the South West end of the Bay now, cliff top but sheltered; and through a thin veil of trees Old Culver from the distant North East looks in at the window. There is certainly no such place in the world as Holborn; and why a man of your truthful spirit should countenance the fiction of Lincoln's Inn Fields I cannot imagine.

The winds and waves have scattered all my temporary work—ailments, but leave others which bode ill for theatrical campaigning. Will you act for me up to Saturday inclusive? The Post (if post it may be called which post is not) is so irregular here that I really don't know how much or little you have had occasion to do for me.—See you next week.

Yours ever,

W. J. Fox.

Fox's praise of Forster was the more magnanimous, as Forster rivalled him on his own ground. If there was anything in which he claimed supremacy, it was in elocution, but "Forster," says Mrs Bridell Fox, "was without exception the very best reader I ever heard. His voice was rich and melodious, and full of varied intonations. If any author was anxious to make a particularly good impression with his new play or poem on a select audience, it was Mr Foster who was begged to read it aloud. He used no action whatever in his reading, and, with the exception of his eyes, which flashed and glowed under heavy beetling brows, he depended entirely on the modulation of his voice. This was quite different from Macready, whose manner of reading was emphatically that of the actor."

Forster undertook to introduce Landor to Fox, and no

doubt did so, but there is no record of acquaintance except the anecdote orally related by Tennyson but dating some years later, of Landor composedly descanting on the beauties of Catullus while Fox was writhing in the agony of a broken arm. The story must owe much to the Laureate's imagination. Mrs Bridell Fox had no recollection of her father having ever broken his arm ; and the steps from Forster's door to Lincoln's Inn Fields, the scene of the alleged accident, are almost level with the causeway.

Landor's works, however, were greatly admired by Fox and the Flowers, especially the *Pentameron*. Another distinguished man who came into momentary contact with Fox was Layard, who says in his autobiography :—

Crabb Robinson introduced me to Mr Fox, the celebrated Unitarian preacher. The eloquence and powerful rhetoric of this remarkable man were a great attraction to me. His discourses and the conversation of Mr Crabb Robinson rapidly undermined the religious opinions in which I had been brought up, and I soon became as independent in my religious as I had already become in my political opinions.

The general happiness of the Craven Hill period was occasionally interrupted by Eliza Flower's ill health, and more frequently and seriously by that of her sister.

The happy residence at Craven Hill came to an end in November 1839. The removal to Queen Square, Westminster, will be best described in a subsequent chapter, but it may be said here that it was actuated by two paramount motives, health, and the inconvenience of living so far out of the world. Of the former Eliza Flower says, writing to Sarah Fox on the last day of 1839 :—

Yes, Craven Hill is becoming a bit of the past now, and when to-morrow comes it will have slid many paces further back than even to-day. Yet sometimes I cannot believe that it is not all

there, just as it was, lovely to the very last, a little quiet piece of Nature, a retreat and shelter ; and I would say, " I want to go home, now please." But one must not forget that there is sometimes a sort of evil in things good, as well as a soul of good in things evil. Those very mosses and ferns and creeping trailing creepers would soon have sucked us to death ; and so we are well away, and get health and strength that will enable us to work and work, that we may be entitled to rest and rest at last.

She was, however, soon to discover that for one of her sensitive temperament the ills of Westminster might exceed the ills of Bayswater. Writing some months later, she says, after mentioning her sister's recovery from illness :—

Her progress towards health has continued without check from day to day, her strength is come, her cough gone, her spirits in a fine and hopeful state. She is able to walk from three to four miles without fatigue, and she sends us songs and wildflowers to cheer and refresh us again and again in the moil and toil of this bustling and stifling London life, if life indeed it may be called. I doubt it, it has almost been death to me, nor do I believe that any familiarity with it can ever reconcile me to the difference. You would scarcely imagine that so great a difference at so little a distance could exist as does exist between Dalston and Clapton, or my dear and departed little shady nook at Craven Hill, and this London atmosphere. I mean not merely the air one breathes, or the sounds one hears, or the sights one sees, but the impossibility to obtain retirement, quietude, seclusion and space in which the habits and tastes of a whole life and moral constitution can be indulged and nourished. Yet it was quite best and rightest to come here, and therefore the trial will not have been made in vain : in no other place could *he* have got through the enormous quantity of work, and usefulness of so various kind as here.

We shall be well warranted in deeming that Fox would not have allowed Eliza to make such a sacrifice for his sake, had he realised its magnitude. But the devotion of

woman transcends the conception of man : and here *the* woman cannot aid him, though another may. By whomsoever Fox's eyes might be opened, it manifestly would not be by Eliza Flower :—

He, bless him ! requires all the cheerfulness and springiness of which I am capable, to correspond with his extreme joyousness of heart, or to entertain him when he is heavy and weary with overwork : and sometimes my wing has felt broken quite.

CHAPTER VII

THE PULPIT—FINSBURY LECTURES—CRITICISMS OF FOX'S
ORATORY—PHILIP HARWOOD—*Hymns and Anthems*—
PUBLIC LECTURES

FROM the schism in his congregation in 1834 to his election to Parliament in 1847 Fox alternated between two spheres of activity, fundamentally not dissimilar, but with little apparent external relation. The religious teacher wrought in the same spirit as the political and social reformer, but their paths rarely intersected. We should not discover from *The True Sun* that the journalist filled a pulpit, or from the Finsbury Lectures that the Sunday orator discoursed on week-days from a journal. The same partition of interests is observable in the private correspondence, where South Place Chapel is rarely alluded to. It was still, nevertheless, a hemisphere of Fox's world, but not the one in which he dwelt by preference. Whether regarded, however, as a means of subsistence, or as a means of influence, or as involving honourable obligation to those who had adhered to him in his time of trial, the position was not one which he could afford to relinquish. The double problem lay before him of repairing the damage wrought by the secession, and of profiting by his emancipation from denominational restrictions to extend his ministrations over the general field of secular affairs. Fox had no intention of laying aside the character of a minister of religion, to be manifested however, in a wider sense than had hitherto obtained recognition at South Place or elsewhere. By

removing to Bayswater he had erased pastoral visitation from his ministerial duties, and by discarding the title of Reverend he relinquished the last vestige of any claim to a special consecration.

The congregation on its part was not behindhand with support, moral and financial.

I went [Sarah Flower Adams writes to her cousin] to chapel with Lizzie for the first time on Sunday week, and she is now again in her old place in the singing choir. She did not sit there the first Sunday, and they did such a pretty thing. They sang the hymns she had composed for them. Dear Liska ! It made her lip quiver and her eyes fill. Many people came round her and shook hands with her and said they were glad to see her back again. The whole affair has amongst other good things been such a test of peoples' hearts and imaginations. So many had had credit for hearts who do not deserve it, and others have had none who do.

Fox tells his mother of the numbers turned away from evening lecture for want of room, but the letter is not dated, and the reference may be to a course on the reign of George III., delivered on Thursday evenings from May to July 1835. Writing on 30th July, he says :

I have had an unexpected compliment in a pretty note from Mrs Gaskell, wife of the member for Wakefield, enclosing a bill for £54 in the name of herself and a few other occasional hearers. She has now gone home to Yorkshire, the length of the session of Parliament having tired her out, but she was a famous recruiting serjeant while in town.

Mrs Gaskell (not related to the authoress of *Mary Barton*) was indeed a lady of much social influence, and a kind and warm friend to many who needed countenance, including Mary Shelley.

The general spirit of Fox's pulpit ministrations after his disconnection from the Unitarian Church is embodied in

the successive series of Finsbury Lectures, ranging from 1835 to 1840, but far from representing the sum of his activity as a preacher during the period, published from the reporter's notes at the expense of members of his congregation; and to which others, disfigured by admitted inaccuracies of reporting, were consequently added in the memorial edition of his writings. The main thought underlying these is that the pulpit had hitherto concerned itself too exclusively with spiritual, and too little with secular things. "I pray thee, deliver thyself like a man of this world." At the time this would not have been admitted: at present it would command general assent, with the proviso that the secular ought to be connected with the spiritual more intimately than it appears to be in the teachings of Fox. This is true: yet the general verdict would probably be that although Fox went too far in the direction he inaugurated, and incurred grave risk of secularising the pulpit entirely, in the main he set an excellent example. Nothing is more characteristic of modern thought than the shift from a theocentric to an anthropocentric standpoint in religion. In former days the theologian sought to establish his case by the authority of Bible or Church, as the case might be, with little heed to the influence of his doctrine on the well-being of the community. The complete reversal of this situation is now writ large in every newspaper. Fox might well have claimed to be in advance of his time; yet his advanced position was less due to originality of mind than to peculiarity of circumstance: and although he greatly extended the efficacy of his pulpit in dealing with moral and social questions, this was not unaccompanied with some serious drawbacks.

The most important of the connected series of lectures delivered at South Place during the period under review were those on "Morality, as modified by the various classes into which Society is divided." "An inquiry into

the history of opinion concerning death, and the mental state induced by its approach," on "The Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Victoria," and on "National Education." The Course on Morality, perhaps, attracted most notice : it took particular professions, such as the clerical, the legal, the military, and showed how their traditional ideas and unwritten laws tended to deflect their members from the standard of abstract morality, and substitute a professional morality in its place. This gave ample scope for attacks on the institutions and arrangements disliked by the speaker, and there was more light than sweetness in the discourses, which are nevertheless profitable for "instruction" as well as for "reproof." The lectures on the Coronation Service are acute as criticism, and powerfully depict the discrepancy between mediæval and modern conceptions, but suffer from the absence of any endeavour to consider the subject in the light of history.

The lectures on National Education—a subject which Fox was afterwards to make especially his own—were among the most valuable of his writings—and were especially so at a time, when the duty of a State to provide for the instruction of its citizens was so imperfectly recognised. Apart from the enforcement of this great principle, the lectures abound with examples of the benefits which popular enlightenment might be expected to produce, including an anticipation of Free Libraries, and with acute remarks on the errors of the educational methods current at the time. The peroration of the second lecture sums up the aspirations of the educational philanthropist with eloquence :

If by the few simple legal and governmental arrangements which I have just glanced at, and by the unsparing application of the national resources, and by the invoking of those means which will raise the teacher to his proper elevation and inde-

pendence in society—a number of such men, animated by that spirit of divine obligation, of faith in knowledge, and of love for humanity and the glory of their country, can be sent forth over the face of the land, what we may not anticipate, boldly and hopefully anticipate, in the generation of which they shall take charge, and yet more in the generation that shall follow ? Under such direction we may imagine that we see the youth of this country growing up in a better and lovelier physical development and more perfect natural symmetry than they can ever exhibit while their early years are bowed down by toil, or while they are left unthought of and uncared for. Under such charge, we see their hearts expanding, love budding and blossoming within them, becoming the substitute for rude and harsh coercion and the depraving effects of a constantly stimulated emulation ; and being in them guidance, impulse, and motive, producing in them the desire of knowledge, and reverence for those who know ; and the reception of it with delight as the proper food and aliment of their souls, by which they advance and grow in favour with God and man. Under such charge, we see them becoming rich in the stores of science ; and though their hands may be doomed to toil, and the destiny may be visible upon them of having to earn and eat their bread in the sweat of their brow, yet in a really national system, where, as in the grave, and as it should be in the house of God, the rich and the poor would meet together before the Lord who is the Maker of them all, they would rise up, though with that destiny to daily labour, not to sycophancy or servility, but with a right sense of what is due to man's own powers and nature, reverencing themselves and so fashioning the undegrading expression of their respect for others. Under such a guidance, we may believe that we see them realising a better condition in society, deriving more physical comfort, more simple, pure, and rational enjoyment for their resources, and rising above the inducements which now continually sink humanity into the brute ; that we see them forming their marriages, not from mere impulse, but so that enduring affection be the spring of exertion and the source of enjoyment, and they become the transmitters to future generations of brighter hopes and of a higher state of being than ever their forefathers enjoyed ; that we see these advancing in life with the great duties of a citizenship worthily discharged, the healthfulness of

the pulse that beats in them felt through the country even to its remotest extremities ; the world evidently growing wiser and better and happier as they are amalgamated with it, and the whole race led forward in its course—those of them whom Nature and God have called to the work of instructing their fellow creatures, by superior mental powers, by the high gift of genius, finding, their way clear, and rejoicing as strong men to run a race, and thus starting onwards in their course of good and glory for themselves and others.

Fox's liberation from sectarian trammels had evidently endowed him with " the liberty of prophesying " ! If he should prove a false prophet the fault will not rest with him, but with the generations succeeding him. There was really nothing Utopian in his expectations, unless he forgot that the ideal teacher would demand the ideal salary : or thought that all mankind would be equally forward to avail themselves of the advantages proffered by his educational clergy. Superior minds are easily tempted to estimate the intellectual ardour of others by their own, forgetting that even in their own case there are seasons when the lower inclination is the more potent ; as Fox himself in later days, though listening dutifully to the harangues of Margaret Fuller, " looked as if he would have much preferred a game of whist."

On the vexed question of religious instruction Fox took an eminently sane position. He was not framing an Education Act, but considering questions of principle. The difficulty of reconciling contending sects afterwards made him, as it made no less orthodox a person than the Vicar of Leeds, an advocate of merely secular education in the public school, but he was far from wishing to exclude the Bible on any other ground : on the contrary, he wished it to be taught, but " not as a class-book ; not as a book in which the child learns to spell and read ; not as the wearisome machinery of his first mechanical attainments in the art of knowledge." Still less did he approve of the

system then ordinary in the National Society's schools, "of making the Bible the instrument of intellectual culture, of teaching all the science and history that is to be taught by and through the Bible." *Exempli gratia*. "Moses was obliged to have three thousand men put to death for idolatry. What digits must you use to express this number?"

The diversity of the views of Fox taken by his auditors at South Place and those who at a later period hung upon his accents at Covent Garden affords pregnant illustration of the truths that things exist as they are perceived, and that the prosperity of the jest lies in the ear of the listener. His political reporters are all rapture, because all sympathy; but the portraits of the pulpit orator, painted by unfriendly artists, have almost as much of the deterring as of the attractive. The most circumstantial is that in the *Portraits of Public Characters* (1841), of James Grant, afterwards editor of *The Morning Advertiser*, a Scotch Calvinist of enormous credulity, who, but for his useful *History of the Newspaper Press*, would be chiefly remembered as the propagator of a lie, and the victim of a hoax. Grant, however, had fair powers of observation, and his account of the external characteristics of Fox's pulpit oratory is probably not inaccurate:

His elocution is remarkable for its chasteness. He is one of the most correct speakers I have ever heard. The most fastidious literary taste could not detect a flaw in his style, nor the finest ear a defect in his delivery. His voice is singularly melodious, though wanting in power. His elocution is quiet and subdued in the extreme, and yet there is great variety in the intonations of his voice. His utterance equally avoids the opposite faults of rapidity and slowness. He never hesitates, never stammers, and very rarely has occasion to recall a word. To address his audience seems to him the easiest and most natural thing in the world; there is not the slightest appearance of effort either in his matter or his manner, and yet, with all

these excellences as a public speaker, Mr Fox has no pretensions whatever to the character of an orator.

The shadow which darkened so many lights was, in Grant's opinion, Fox's inveterate habit of treating his congregation as if they were rational creatures. He made no sort of appeal to their "feelings, passions, or prejudices":

His manner is in perfect keeping with the coldness of his matter. It is only by the movement of his lips and the sound of his voice that you perceive that he is speaking. It is only by the force of his arguments, the excellence of his ideas, and the beauty of his diction, that you are convinced he feels interest in the subject he is discussing. I need not add that Mr Fox's style of speaking would not suit a popular audience; indeed his addresses would be to them intolerable. Persons only of highly refined mind can listen to him with any pleasure.

The groundlessness of the notion that Fox would be unable to sway a popular audience was soon demonstrated by his League orations; and the rapt expression in his daughter's portrait of him in the act of addressing a public meeting, taken about 1845 and engraved in *The People's Journal*, proves that a speaker may manifest interest in what he is saying otherwise than by gesticulation. Impassioned appeals, moreover, are not wanting in Fox's oratory. On one occasion he repeated in the pulpit the conclusion of the leader in which he had pointed the moral of the murderer Greenacre, in Fox's view a martyr to the Moloch of respectability, who cut his mistress into morsels that he might continue to enjoy the good opinion of the world.

You can imagine with what effect; that is not the word, though, to describe the stillness, with just the sound of the clock which struck on the sense like the tolling of the knell for that poor wretched man.

Grant is not a highly intelligent reporter, but his report is of value as conveying recent impressions. This cannot be said of a description by a much abler man, Denis Owen Madden (or Maddyn), an Irishman of the Young Ireland school, author among other productions of an anonymous novel entitled *Wynville, or Clubs and Coteries*, in which, along with many other notabilities of the day, Fox is introduced under the transparent pseudonym of P. J. Foss. The character of Madden's impressions as reminiscences is shown by the fact that eight years had elapsed since he had made Fox the subject of an article in the *Dublin Nation*, clearly evincing his hostility as a Roman Catholic to the most recent development of Protestant thought. The article, however, is mainly critical, the sketch in the novel mainly descriptive; and the record of Madden's observation, even if somewhat out of date, claims more attention than the mere statement of his opinions. After a clever sketch of "the congregation of ugly women and eccentric men," the preacher is introduced "slowly ascending the pulpit stairs":

When I got a fair view of his face I was displeased at its expression. There was a furtive look about the eyes and mouth, an appearance as if he were playing a part that did not become him. He seemed as if he had done something which made him feel unquietly, like a monk of La Trappe addicted to eating beefsteak in the dark. The flesh of his cheeks was pale and flabby; his hair was black and greasy and fantastically frizzed up. His collar was like Lord Byron's, but his throat was not; his appearance on the whole was strange, striking, and disagreeable.

After a professed account of Fox's discourse, offering little resemblance to better authenticated reports of his oratory, the observer continues:

His voice was harsh, husky and hoarse; he affected a careless air, but his manner was really studied; the enunciation was

distinct, and the sentences measured. His eloquence was in the spirit of a tirade, but his language was choice, his sarcasm poignant, and his elocution singularly impressive, though defective in art. In spite of my revulsion from the appearance of the man, I was spell-bound.

Various slips in this account reveal the part which imagination and memory have had in it: the "pale and flabby" cheeks are not easily reconciled with the testimony of Grant and others to the orator's "coppery" complexion, and no portrait represents the hair "fantastically frizzed up," or frizzed at all. On the contrary, the black locks were parted in the middle in Leigh Hunt's style, and hung down to the shoulders "in most admired disorder," says the correspondent of a Somersetshire paper, who imparts vitality to his portrait by summing up the "short, thick-set, punchy" frame, the "huge" head, the "broad face," the forehead whose apparent lowness (for it is higher than it seems) dismays the phrenologist, and the general cast of feature "remarkably plain." Not until he comes to the eyes can this physiognomist find a favourable word, but these subjugate him. "These features are almost compensated by a brilliant dark eye, that flashes from under beetling brows with that peculiar liveliness and glitter which almost invariably mark the presence of intellect, as if the eyes were windows from which the soul looked out upon the world, and you caught glimpses of her while you gazed." This seems a flight above Grant, to whom otherwise the sketch might almost be attributed, so completely are the representations of the unimpassioned manner of Fox's delivery in unison.

Madden's criticism upon Fox as a thinker is, like his description of his personal appearance, largely spiced with the *odium theologicum*, but there is truth in his objection that Fox "was fit to coast the lower regions of logic, never to ascend beyond mere analysis, because incapable of embracing a large synthesis." In other words, he was fitter

to deal with particulars than generals, and his intellect was rather critical than constructive. He was himself aware of this, and laboured to systematise his ideas, and affiliate his intuitions to principles. He thus lays out the ground plan of a course of religious lectures in a letter to Eliza Flower, probably about 1842 :

There is yet much to be done with these Religious Lectures before they can be begun. What is the foundation principle ? Is it not that moral truth, or law, is to be sought in the constitution and tendencies of human nature ? Is not that the point from which to start ? Then comes the great law of progress, individual and social ; with the subordination of the progress of society to individual development. Your three states seem to me resolvable into two, the reflective and the objective, or the analytical and the impulsive, succeeding each other alternately, every time on a higher plane. This bears analogy to the Saint Simonian theory of the history of humanity, in which they trace the alternation of the synthetic state and the critical. Only yours is exclusively individual, as theirs was exclusively social.

If the first point be that human nature is the source of all virtue, law, truth, religion, etc., what is the last point ? Is it not that the philosophy of development, as it generates heaven on earth, also affords a strong presumption of life in death ?

One must have books to trace that ; but I suspect that all the separate portions of the real religion have been worked out, more or less, by different minds ; and that the work to be done is the combination of the scattered members, and their animation as a whole with a living spirit.

Development was evidently in the air, though the *Vestiges* were not yet, and three years were to lapse ere Newman should write his essay on *The Development of Christian Doctrine*. Martineau, reviewing the theological tendencies of the day for the information of Channing, took note in 1840 of the rise of a new school of rationalistic Unitarians who were disposed to base religion upon the laws of Nature and the constitution of man, and with whom he

supposed Fox to be more intimately allied than was really the case :

There is a set of mere anti-supernaturalists chiefly proceeding from the phrenological school, or from the numerous rank of thinkers indirectly created by it. To these, the discovery of an organ of wonder in the brain explains the origin of all accounts of miracles, whilst the organ of veneration makes it quite proper to be devout. Their faith is, accordingly, rather in the religiousness of man than in the reality of God, respecting whom it seems very doubtful whether they would have much concerned themselves, had it not been for the cerebral provision of the thought of him ; but something must be done or at least said in order to satisfy this. I need not say that in such a style of thought there can be no real earnestness, but only those spurious imitations of living religion which in the end turn out to be all that a materialistic philosophy can produce. In this case, however, there is great personal amiableness, considerable, though undisciplined, intellectual activity, and much social and popular exertion, particularly for the diffusion of scientific knowledge among the masses of the people. An enquiry into the Origin of Christianity, by Mr Hennell (of Mr Aspland's congregation, Hackney) may be considered as representing very fairly the character of this school ; and although Mr Fox is a man of too much force of mind to belong exclusively to them, his influence more nearly coincides with theirs than with any other. I believe that they are very numerous among us, and likely to increase.

Fox assuredly would not have disdained the support which phrenology or any other physical science could offer to religion, but he was not a follower of George Combe. He said, as reported by Miss Collet, that " phrenology had one position which seemed to him a central error, it considered the mind as a complex and not as a single thing. At the same time he did not deny the connection between the formation of the brain and the manifestation of mind." He had no doubt by 1840 abandoned belief in miraculous agency, as Martineau himself was to do within a few years,

but he does not appear to have assailed it. His attitude is best explained by an extract from Miss Collet's report of a discourse at the end of 1841, alluding to the retirement of his colleague Philip Harwood :

He reviewed the changes that had taken place during the year, spoke of the improvement of the music, and complimented us on having got through the year without a dispute. With regard to his late colleague he said there had been a difference of opinion. For himself he must say that there had never been the shadow of a collision between them, and that he did not the less revere Mr Harwood's simplicity, earnestness, and truthfulness of character, and the conscientiousness with which he spoke forth his opinions, because he himself judged it better to be neutral on theological dogmas, confining himself to moral truths.

Philip Harwood retained to the end of his days something of the formal courtesy and almost nervous fastidiousness of the old-fashioned Presbyterian minister, but probably few of his subsequent co-operators in *The Saturday Review* suspected in him an Unitarian minister who had been successively dislodged from three pulpits. Such, however, was the fact. Originally a solicitor, he had studied for the Presbyterian ministry at the University of Edinburgh under Dr Chalmers, had embraced Unitarianism as the result of his independent investigation, and had spent some tranquil years as minister of the little Unitarian congregation at Bridport, where he published several separate sermons. His views developed with the opportunities here afforded him for quiet study ; and his rejection of the miraculous, announced while fulfilling a temporary engagement at Edinburgh in 1839, led to an angry controversy and to his migration to Finsbury as assistant to Fox. Fox writes to Forster in January 1840 :—

I am much occupied with one whom I expect to be my assistant and my future successor.

But Harwood seems to have been found too much of a theologian by the Finsbury congregation, who had no taste for polemic divinity. "A very quiet, sedate preacher"; an informant told Mr Moncure Conway, "pleasant to listen to, but not such as would incite me to come from a distance to hear him." His connection with them, dissolved with mutual good feeling in August 1841, produced at least one important result. Alfred Russel Wallace speaks in his autobiography of the influence exerted upon his mental development by the published lectures of a Unitarian minister, whose name he is unable to give. These were without doubt Harwood's lectures on German anti-supernaturalism, delivered at South Place in 1841. He passed to the Beaumont Institution, Mile End, where he conducted religious service regularly until the end of 1843, when Beaumont's son, succeeding to the control and disliking Harwood's theology, quashed the engagement. Harwood had meanwhile become sub-editor of *The Examiner* through Fox's introduction to Forster; he passed thence to *The Spectator*; and thence to *The Morning Chronicle*, during its brief revival as organ of the Peelite party under the conduct of Douglas Cook, who recognising Harwood's especial merit as "the best sub-editor ever known," carried him off to *The Saturday Review*. He became chief editor on Cook's death in 1868. The ex-pastor of South Place Chapel seemed incongruously coupled with the Puseyite Beresford Hope, but proprietor and editor agreed perfectly, and Harwood conducted the *Review*, if less brilliantly than his predecessor—a heaven-born editor, if ever editor could claim celestial birth—yet with competent ability, until his retirement in 1883. His unassuming personality passed unrecognised by the outer world, but those admitted to his more intimate acquaintance respected the strength of character veiled by his quiet bearing, appreciated his violin-playing to the piano-accompaniment of his gifted daughter (honourably known

as a dramatist under the pseudonym of Ross Neil) and enjoyed his martial terrier Moses' performance of the volunteer exercise, and the vehement demonstrations of disapproval with which that well-principled dog was wont to receive the names of Gladstone and Bright.

The year 1841 was eventful in the history of the South Place congregation, for it also witnessed the reorganisation of its musical servicess by the publication of *Hymns and Anthems*, more than a third of these the composition of one of its own members. Eliza Flower's first musical publication had been her *Fourteen Musical Illustrations of the Waverley Novels* (1831), followed by *Songs of the Seasons* in *The Monthly Repository* for 1834. Under the stimulus of pecuniary pressure, she had been greatly occupied with musical composition in 1837, receiving, however, so little encouragement that she was beginning to doubt whether she ought not to divert her attention to a more remunerative art. She says in a letter to Sarah Fox :

I've been working all the week and from morning till eve—work it can hardly be called, 'tis the most delightful exercise. But I must give you my reason first. A sad misgiving has been coming over me about the sale of this music of mine. Of the twelve copies sent hither and thither as he thought best, to musical people, not one single acknowledgment have I received. It may be neither rudeness nor inattention, it may be the usual way of commonplace people, but it proves one thing, or looks like it, that it has not taken root in any of those places, and 'tis possible a prejudice against my name may exist in many quarters so as seriously to injure the sale.

By May 1841 *Hymns and Anthems*, the words chiefly from *Holy Scripture* and the writings of the Poets, were fighting their way into daylight through the mechanical impediments inevitable in the case of such undertakings. Sarah Flower Adams, then living in the same house with her sister, writes to her cousin Celina :

Lizzie is in the thick of the torment with publisher, music engraver, and such like. She has had to hunt up the latter, and watch him at his doings, like puss a mouse. Her work is twenty times worse than mine¹ owing to the innumerable technicalities, added to the supremacy of her taste, which seeing all the errors of the old way of doing things, has to contend against the vested interests of their old routine. Notwithstanding all this, she is arranging a new hymn book to supersede the old collection which has long annoyed her at the chapel; and this, which will include all the words in her "Sacred Song" and the establishment of a new choir, are all upon her head, and within her very soul, as you would see, and I wish could hear. Every day brings forth a lovely heaven-born seraph-child, all godfathered by some choice poet.

This might well be said, for among the authors laid under contribution for this hymnal were Shakespeare, Milton, Gray, Byron, Coleridge, Shelley, Tennyson and Browning. Never was any similar collection more catholic. It was its distinctive characteristic that the text was seldom derived from the founts, pure as they might be, of professional hymn writers, but from the wide ocean of poetry, wherever sufficiently inspired with spiritual feeling. Pope begins, and Milton concludes. But few of the pieces, therefore, had been actually composed as hymns, though Milton's and Addison's versions from the Psalms are exceptions. The number is 150, in accordance with the number of the Psalms. Sixty-three are composed by Eliza Flower, and the music of several others is adapted or arranged by her. The general tone is one of hope and gladness, most reasonably, for although spiritual perplexities and anxieties can by no means be excluded from the sphere of religious poetry, they should not be put forth as representing the feeling of an entire congregation. It is nevertheless remarkable that the most celebrated of the pieces by modern authors included in the collection, Sarah Flower Adams'

¹ Probably the composition of *Vivia Perpetua*.

“Nearer to Thee,” which divides the palm of popularity in recent English sacred song with Newman’s “Lead, kindly Light,” is, strictly speaking, no more a hymn than “Lead, kindly Light” itself, both being strictly personal expressions of feeling, and in no respect congregational. The merit of the poetry, and the universal truth of the sentiment, have overcome the obstacle in both instances. The original MS. of “Nearer to Thee” is dated November 1840, when *Vivia Perpetua* was in process of composition. Sarah Flower Adams wrote or translated several of her pieces for the collection. One, less known than “Nearer to Thee,” is of almost equal beauty :

He sendeth sun, he sendeth shower,
Alike they’re needful for the flower ;
And joys and tears alike are sent
To give the soul fit nourishment,
As comes to me or cloud or sun,
Father, Thy will, not mine, be done.

Can loving children e’er reprove
With murmurs, whom they hurt and love ?
Creator, I would ever be
A trusting, loving child to thee
As comes to me or cloud or sun.
Father, Thy will, not mine, be done.

O ne’er will I at life repine,
Enough that Thou hast made it mine
When falls the shadow cold of death
I yet will sing with parting breath,
As comes to me or cloud or sun,
Father, Thy will, not mine, be done.

Fox was the literary editor of the hymnal, and he also prepared a selection of devotional and philosophical passages from great writers, to alternate in the chapel services with passages from Scripture : which could not be found when, after his death, it was proposed to include

it in memorial edition of his writings. Probably his successors had felt indisposed to be trammelled in the exercise of their own judgment. Eleven of the hymns are from his pen, and some of these exhibit him in the light of a true poet. He wrote verse on domestic and social occasions for the greater part of his life, and almost always with both grace and energy. But his more ambitious efforts prove that even the combination of a highly poetical temperament with unusual powers of expression will not make a poet in the absence of that gift which, reversing Wordsworth's noble saying on Liberty, may be defined as the gift of that which ever *must* be given. Yet now and again the thought is so striking, and the expression, though not exempt from flaws, so vigorous, that what may have been originally the rhetorical ornament of a discourse soars into poetry :—

“ Make us a god,” said man :
 Power first the voice obeyed ;
 And soon a monstrous form
 Its worshippers dismayed :
 Uncouth and huge, by nations rude adored
 With savage rites and sacrifice abhorred.

“ Make us a god,” said man :
 Art next the voice obeyed,
 Lovely, serene, and grand,
 Uprose the Athenian maid :
 The perfect statue Greece, with wreathéd brows,
 Adores in festal rites and lyric vows.

“ Make us a god,” said man :
 Religion followed Art,
 And answered, “ Look within,
 God is in thine own heart :
 His noblest image there, and holiest shrine,
 Silent revere, and be thyself divine.”

Nearly a thousand copies of the text of *Hymns and Anthems* were promptly disposed of. “ If,” said Fox,

“people would have bought the music too, it would have been something.” Here, however, they disappointed the composer’s expectations. Of five parts, three, *Adoration*, *Aspiration*, and *Belief*, comprising all the pieces designed for congregational use, were published in 1841; *Heaven on Earth* was kept back until 1846; and *Life in Death*, has not hitherto appeared. There were certainly impediments to the circulation of compositions adapted for so exceptional a congregation, and requiring to be executed by a professional choir. Eliza in his discouragement seems to have thought of music lessons as a resource.

Do not [writes Fox] be harassed about the money part of affairs, at least no further than to let them effect any plan of immediate adoption, for if I can work well in two or three months, they will not be so bad as they were before Christmas. They may be grappled with fairly and hopefully if one be strong for the conflict. But do not talk of lessons in music and all that, for if you tell me I shall not work for you I shall never work again.

Fox’s letters to Eliza Flower are difficult to date, for, the originals having been in shorthand, they exist only in copies by Mrs Bridell Fox, who has in general transcribed only what appeared to her the most interesting portions. If the above, as seems likely, was written early in 1842, it would nearly coincide in date with what appeared an undeniable token of success, the celebration in April by an enthusiastic congregation of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Fox’s ministry. To Eliza Flower this appeared in the light of a divine event, towards which creation had for some time been visibly moving. Her rapture, if immoderate, is not therefore overstrained: it is the feeling natural to a proud and happy heart, the very *Nunc Dimittis* of faithful love. The proceedings described took place at the London Tavern, where 450 people sat down to dinner and a well-filled purse was presented to the hero of the

occasion, together with an address written by Forster, and now preserved in the Chapel library. On the Easter Sunday proceeding Fox had delivered an address setting forth circumstantially the spirit and objects of his ministry which will be found in Mr Moncure Conway's *Centenary History of the South Place Society*.

The entertainment for the first time of women together in a mass on a public occasion would alone make this banquet memorable.

Fox's public addresses at this time and for some years afterwards were on a higher plane than formerly. They were less practical, but more spiritual. An earnest man can imbue politics with a religious spirit, but he cannot easily make politics a province of religion. It is otherwise with science, poetry and art; and Fox's increased attention to these themes raised the general character of his ministrations, and tinged his oratory with a devotional glow. These lectures, nevertheless, were not published, and their only record, so far as known, is in the notes of a young female auditor, to whose memory it is a privilege to consecrate a few words. Sophia Dobson Collet, sister of Charles Dobson Collet, celebrated for his antagonism to the "taxes on knowledge," was born on 22nd February 1822. She possessed the utmost amiability of disposition, the utmost refinement of mind, and an energetic soul imprisoned in a frail and deformed body. If, however, the "tenement of clay" was "o'er informed" by its tenant, as from its diminutiveness it well might be, it seemed rather vivified than "fretted to decay." Effort was the essence of her life, and after every attack of disabling illness was resumed with new vigour. Her favourite studies were philosophy and music; the former attracted her to Fox, the latter to Eliza Flower. A few of her compositions appear in the South Place service-book. She made, though irregularly and sometimes very briefly, reports from memory of Fox's lectures from 1841

to 1845, which seem to be the only record remaining. During her latter years she was especially interested in religious, moral, and social reform in India, edited the *Brahmo Somaj Annud*, and left behind her an unfinished life of Rammohun Roy, completed by another hand and printed privately after her death.

One of the most characteristic passages from the abstracts of Fox's lectures given by Miss Collet is his vindication of Shelley's assertion that "the imagination is a faculty not less imperial and essential than the reason," conducting to an eulogy on an illustrious poet just taken away :

In tracing the course of these three different powers, Passion, Reason, and Imagination, we see that they tend to produce each other. An acute reasoner will often call to his aid the acute illustration or the fit image. The imaginative power makes a reasoner. Images are ever in affinity with truths. When a man attempts to illustrate a false philosophy by the great images of nature, his comparison is sure to break down or turn against him. The best reasoners have been imaginative. Jeremy Taylor was so, and Bacon, and Milton. The powers are best developed when in harmony with each other ; then will their possessor clothe a truth in material types, and show forth a fact in an enduring image. What was it but passion in Christ, which gave birth to those beautiful sayings which have drawn tears in all ages, and will do so as long as the world shall last ?

After enlarging on the definition of Passion Fox continued :

What time so appropriate as the present to note that Campbell has just been taken from us ? Campbell, the bard of Hope, who has so beautifully depicted the soul's aspirations, from the longing after the freedom to the craving for immortality. Wherever there was a wrong on the face of the earth, there was Campbell's sympathy. O ! we might have known this last fortnight that he was gone from the world, when Nicholas of

Russia came among us, and no indignant song burst forth from Campbell ! ”

This, to an audience to whom Campbell's torrent of indignation at Poland's wrongs was familiar as a household word, at a time when the oppressor of Poland was enjoying the hospitality of Windsor, must have come as an electric stroke.

The lectures on the Passions followed a course on Poetry, which had succeeded one on Science. In the first of the series on Poetry, Fox treated of the power of Poetry to remodel Theology, beginning with a summary of the general spirit of the preceding course :

The truths of Science ever tend towards the uniform and the universal—they are one in all countries and in all sects. There is not one geometry or algebra for England, and another for France, one for Europe and another for America ; it is everywhere recognised that two and two are four and that the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. All this goes on without proselytism—we have no missions to geologize the orientals. Exeter Hall is not crowded with multitudes for such objects. But Science advances like the dawn of day which without meetings or annual reports goes on brightening and brightening, till at last the Sun reaches the meridian and pours a flood of glory over the face of the globe. And as Science advances, the religion of Science advances with it. For whatever may be the creed of the investigator, there is in Science the perception of grandeur, order, harmony, causation, law, truth and beauty—and their perception in the mind is religion, and these qualities are what we name *God*—the loftiest idea which the mind can conceive. Some think of it as an all-pervading Ether, others as a flood of glory radiating from some particular locality. Others as a Personality somewhat analogous to that of a human being, and others again as Law ever-existent everywhere with all being—but however men may picture, or decline to picture, their idea, all come to the same point—the loftiest conception of which man is capable is his Divine conception. And this accounts for the remarkable congruity in the expressions of great minds on this subject.

It is of no avail to say—this philosopher was an infidel, or that Astronomer was an Atheist. Take the most sublime passages in the Kuran, and place them side by side with the most sublime passages in the Bible,—take the abstractions of Plato or the meditations of Fénelon,—in all we shall find that the Religion of Nature is at the bottom of all other religions and that as there is but one science so there is really but one religion and one God. This Science has the prophet, the poet and the legislator for its priesthood,—all Nature for its mighty Temple, and the life, the ever-growing life of man for its unceasing worship. Poetry has a corrective power as well as Science, but it differs from science in its mode of influence and sphere of thought, though resembling it in its enduringness of nature.

The speaker then traced the corrective influence which Poetry had exercised over Theology among the ancient Hebrews and Greeks, how the bards of the Old Testament had paved the way from the crude theology of Moses to the pure religion of Christ, how the poetical spirit of the Greeks had refined the monstrous physical force deities which they imported from the East into idealised human beings, and how, when this Theology began to wear out, Poetry was the first to rise against it, and has left us, in the *Prometheus* of Æschylus an enduring protest against tyranny and injustice even when invested with the attributes of Divinity :—

Ill do they conceive of Poetry who regard it merely as a means of relaxation and amusement. Such may be the case with the commonplace verses of which there is such an abundance in the world—but Poetry has a higher task. It is a portion of the intellectual and moral universe, and as essential to that, as rivers, forests, and mountains, to the physical universe. It softens manners,—it inspires Art—and it has its homely mission too and speaks to us from the quiet hedgerow and the simple flowers of the field. And Order and Harmony, as they are eternal in the material world, so also are they immortal in the soul of Humanity.

From these general considerations Fox passed in subsequent lectures to particular poets, among them Dante. He said that he preferred the *Purgatory* to both the other divisions of the *Commedia* :

It contains the ideas of the appropriateness and corrective tendency of punishment, which we of the present age are only beginning to attempt to apply practically. How grand and true is the idea that the will to raise to a higher sphere of itself gives the power to do so ! It is ever true that in the mortal world aspiration is Ascension. The soul acts in volitions and in a similar manner to that Creative Power which thinks and it is done. And when one soul finally quits its sufferings and attains to Heaven a shout of rejoicing shakes the Mountain of Purgatory to its base. This is even an advance upon the idea that angels in heaven rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, for here it is fellow sinners that rejoice.

There was no poet with whom Fox was in more intimate sympathy than Milton, except as regarded the gloomier aspects of his theology. A fine lecture upon him concluded thus :

Were Milton to return to earth he would find all high places shut against him, and would retire from the world's turmoil with the exclamation : " They also serve who only stand and wait."

It is significant of Fox's enthusiasm for Milton that when he discoursed on Wordsworth, he selected for recitation the sonnet, " Milton, thou should'st be living at this hour," and this most Miltonic passage :

Urania, I shall need
Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven.
For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
Deep—and aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.

All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
 That ever was put forth in personal form—
 Jehovah, with his thunder, and the choir
 Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal throne,
 I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not
 The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
 Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
 By help of dreams—can breed such fear and awe
 As fall upon us often when we look
 Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man.

There seem to have been no other lectures upon recent poets. Of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, Fox said on another occasion :

There is an autumnal tinge on all its gorgeous beauty. Like the pillars of old Rome, around its eternal marble clings the ivy. Gibbon has no hopefulness in man's progression, no faith in freedom. And so *should* the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire be written. So first, but not so last. That history must be told again—told by one who has faith in Humanity, and who sees that in rights there are latent might, who sees something besides decay in that great rushing down.

On the whole, Fox's ministry had not answered ill to the ideal which, in his anniversary address in 1842, he stated himself to have formed :

In endeavouring to work out the Christianity of the present day, it has been my object to have a religion which, while it shall not lose its Oriental glory, while it shall not be less contemplative and imaginative than when it dwelt in its native towers, or looked up from those rich Oriental plains to the shining stars of that brilliant hemisphere ; while it shall be rich in the recollections of earlier times, shall yet bring its treasures to our homes, dwell at our firesides, walk with us in the streets of this our actual London, share in the business of the shop and the mart, note well the proceedings of the Courts of Justice and the Senate, find its way to the prison and the poor-house, make its influence felt through all the complica-

tions of social life, and establish itself, not as an antique conventionalism, but as a sustaining and inspiring principle in which we live and move and have our being.

The adjustment of the limits of the secular and the spiritual, when comprehended within the same sphere, is not exempt from difficulty. Fox seemed to feel that he had leaned too much to the former : his last discourses, delivered when he had ceased to officiate as regular pastor, were entirely of a religious character, devoted to the systematisation, so far as might be, of the intuitions of a poetical mind striving to compass logical precision of thought.

CHAPTER VIII

FOX—MACREADY AND DRAMATIC CRITICISM

“ A LWAYS have one horse and one hobby.” The first clause of this precept of a wise man was but imperfectly observed by Fox, who at the time of his life now under review had the noble, steady Pulpit and Press both yoked to his chariot, and was about to add Platform. But he could not be charged with keeping more than one hobby, though there were seasons when the hobby threatened to develop into horse. Though well versed in English literature, he could hardly be called a man of letters ; he enjoyed music without understanding it ; and though his judgment of works of art was generally sound, he was no more “ æsthetic ” than the architecture of his own chapel. The form of art which really had power to abstract him from the prose of ordinary life was the dramatic. Fox’s innate love of the drama, it will be remembered, had taken him on many a surreptitious expedition from his college to the theatre, a journey to and fro of several miles ; but it will also be remembered that he wended back with curiosity ungratified when he had doubts as to the character of the entertainment. These anecdotes of the youth sum up the attitude of the man towards the stage, enthusiastic in proportion as it seemed to fulfil his ideal, critical as it came short, and prepared at once by refinement of taste and exaltation of aim to welcome the great actor and the great regeneration when these appeared united in the person of William Charles Macready.

But for Macready, it is hardly likely that Fox would have become a conspicuous dramatic critic : at all events the criticisms which he might have contributed to the press would have been desultory, and uninspired by steady and uplifting purpose.

Notwithstanding the warm mutual regard which from the first animated the two men, Fox does not appear as Macready's principal champion in the press until Macready embarks upon his great enterprise of restoring the true Shakespeare to the stage by becoming lessee of Covent Garden in September 1837. Fox saw in this the realisation of a long cherished ideal of his own, and never was critical ability exerted more enthusiastically in the cause of actor or author. The disaster, as it seemed, which about this time befell Fox by the abrupt discontinuance of *The True Sun* benefited Macready by transferring Fox's energies to *The Morning Chronicle*, where, though under severe restraint as a politician, he had a free hand as a critic. From this time and for some years to come, there was for the *Chronicle* but one Macready, and Fox was his prophet. Congeniality of disposition no doubt counted for much, and in fact, though Fox was rich in friendships none of these seem to have been either so intimately cordial or so entirely untroubled as his friendship with Macready. It ceased but with his life and there is no appearance of the slightest temporary estrangement at any period. It appears also distinguished from his other friendships by the admission of a certain superiority on the part of his object. Fox's relations with other men usually are on a footing of perfect equality : he is entirely free from assumption, but equally remote from any notion that his correspondent may be his superior. To Macready alone he sometimes seems to look up, as to one by whom his ideals had become realities.

The first trace of personal communication between Fox and Macready is in May 1834, in connection with a project

then entertained by Sarah Flower, not yet Sarah Flower Adams, for going on the stage, Macready according an interview and advice. In May 1835, Macready records in his diary that Dr Elwin (afterwards editor of *The Quarterly Review*, and presumably an orthodox divine, but an ardent friend of Forster's) has taken him to South Place Chapel :

Mr Fox preached. His prayer was fervent, and wide in its charitable application as the world itself ; he concluded with the Lord's Prayer, which he repeated well. His sermon or lecture, for there was no text, was upon the influence of those arts connected with the imagination upon religious feeling. The effect was conviction. The truth of his proposition was as manifest as those sublime and beautiful works of the Creator from which he borrowed his noble and illustrative imagery. To attempt to record the eloquent arguments, definitions, and descriptions, would be idle. I have much of the subject matter in my mind, but not arranged, nor in those words that burned, and kindled my enthusiasm as no speaker ever did before. It was everything that the exponent of a religious and philosophic system of worship should be. He sent to express his wish to see me, and I was conducted into the vestry, where I thanked him, and promised to let him know when I could dine with him, to meet the author of "Cosmo."

This dinner did not take place for six months, but, when it did, it was the means of introducing Macready not merely to Horne, but to Browning :

November 27th. Went from chambers to dine with Rev. W. J. Fox, Bayswater. Met with him Mr Horne, author of "Cosmo," Miss Flower, who lives in the house with Mr Fox, and a little girl, his daughter. I like Mr Fox very much, he is an original and profound thinker, and most eloquent and ingenious in supporting the penetrating views he takes. Mr Robert Browning, the author of *Paracelsus*, came in after dinner. I was very much pleased to meet him. His face is full of intelligence. My time passed most agreeably. Mr Fox's

defence of the suggestion that Lady Macbeth should be a woman of delicate and fragile frame pleased me very much though he opposed me, and of course triumphantly.

Cherchez la femme! Fox's paradoxical view of the delicacy and fragility of Macbeth's ruthless and imperious spouse can hardly have been unconnected with the fact that Sarah Flower Adams was endeavouring to appear in the character. Nor was this all. The "little girl" also was as stage-struck. Macready writes with sense and kindness :

Nov. 28, 1835.

Will you let me make so free with you as to say, if your interesting little girl persists in her resolution (which I hope she will not do) of devoting herself to our unhappy art, I shall be most happy to render her any and all the assistance in my power, and possibly my experience may enable me to render her some little service.

Dec. 6.

You are aware of my opinion upon my profession and its evil tendencies, and therefore must be sure that I rejoice at your disinclination to encourage the experiment alluded to—but should you ever alter your views in clearing away as many of the thorns from my little friend's path as my earnest wish and experience may enable me to do.

It was not until the end of 1838 that "Tottie," yielding to her father's counsels, laid aside all thought of the boards, and addressed herself in earnest to the study of painting, by which she was to acquire reputation. By this time Sarah Flower Adams also had renounced her dramatic aspirations. She had appeared as Lady Macbeth at Richmond, and her performance had obtained considerable praise from *The Spectator*, and had early in 1837 procured a temporary engagement at Bath, interrupted by the epidemic of influenza which at that time swept the country, and which in her case proved the prelude to a

long and severe illness. She had the soul and the countenance, but by no means the physique, of an actress: "person" she says, "very thin, very deaf (making me very stupid), and five feet two and a half. No animal spirits, what would be called dull, unless when excited by any favourite subject or thing, and then feeling like a runaway horse." Her ambition had been hinted to a veteran who as a dramatic author had failed more ingloriously than any other contemporary man of parts, but whose half-century's acquaintance with the stage had made him a well-head of theatrical lore. Fox writes to Eliza Flower in May 1835 :

Godwin was at the Gaskells' ; and the editor, or one of them, of the *Courier* newspaper. We had lots of theatrical talk, and you cannot imagine how sound the old gentleman is on such matters. He goes back to Garrick, worships Kean, venerates Mrs Siddons, holds all the other Kembles at arm's length, thinks F. H. Kelly the best Juliet he ever saw, and wants faith in Macready. On my saying that Macready had only of very late done himself justice in Shakespeare, he instantly replied, "I am sure he cannot play Othello," I believe without knowing that the attempt had been made. We had a regular discussion of Lady Macbeth, and I could not help saying that I had seen Mrs Siddons' notion of the character (see Campbell's life of Mrs Siddons) realised, which made them all look amazingly curious. But there I left off. I hope Sallie will do it in London in time for the good old man ; he deserves to see it before he dies. From his talk I should think that when Mrs Siddons was young there was something of Sallie's sweetness about her.

"The good old man" did not enjoy this especial recompense of a well-spent life, dying eleven months after the date of this conversation ; but, had he lived to the age of Methusaleh, he would not have seen Sarah Adams on the boards of a London theatre. Her error was the same as that which led Goethe to devote so much time not

merely to the study of the principles but to the practice of the processes of science, the mistake of sympathy for faculty. A vacation as dramatist she had, and she was to prove it.

It is remarkable to find two such contemporary histrionic geniuses as Macready and Fanny Kemble equally decided in the condemnation of the calling to which they owed fame and fortune. Macready perhaps wrote partly under the influence of the blight then cast upon him by the persecuting manager of Drury Lane, "Poet Bunn," not altogether such an absolute fiend as the tragedian's imagination depicted him, but who, as Mr Archer puts it, "regarded actors as his natural enemies; they got what they could out of him, and he got what he could out of them." Strained relations led at last to the memorable fracas of 29th April 1836, equally damaging to the manager's organ of vision and to the actor's organ of self-esteem. Fox hastened to the rescue:

CRAVEN HILL,
April 30.

MY DEAR SIR,—The Drury advertisement in yesterday's paper excited such a strong sense of the insult thereby offered to yourself, to the public, and the the Drama itself, that only circumstances amounting to impossibility prevented my going to the theatre in the hope of some public expression of the feeling which the occasion demanded.

I should not have written to tell you this, but that a very confused paragraph in to-day's Morning Chronicle impels me to say that should any circumstance render such means as I may possess of communicating with the public mind be of any service, it would much gratify me to be instructed how to render them most efficient. I hope in that case, when the time comes, to hear from you, and meanwhile remain,

Dear sir, respectfully and truly yours,

W. J. Fox.

61 LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS,
May 1st, 1836.

MY DEAR SIR,—It was a very great satisfaction to me to read last night your kind expressions of sympathy, and to find that, although I had forgotten the respect I owed myself, I had not lost with it the consoling regard of those whom I so much value and revere. The statement in the Morning Chronicle is not circumstantially correct, but it is unfortunately true that after having subjected my feelings to an endurance of very many heavy injuries, and insulting sarcasms from this despicable person, in an unhappy moment my indignation overmastered my better judgment, and I was hurried into the positive folly—I can only term it what I feel it to have been—of expressing my contempt of him, and of inflicting personal chastisement upon him. The shame I feel—the sense of my own degradation in yielding to the momentary impulse which urged me to descend so far, I cannot describe to you. Of this degree of blame I cannot acquit myself, nor hope that others will, but the punishment that followed it in the self-reproach I undergo, is indeed more than proportionate to the error I have committed.

How truly do I thank you for your wish to serve me! But I fear I cannot mitigate the penalty of my indiscretion. I had no right to forget the distance that divided me from so base and infamous a person as Mr Bunn and in descending to overstep it, I seemed to place myself beyond the reach of help. I do not know his purpose; it is said he means to prosecute me. I hope, at whatever expense, he may do so as perhaps his experiments upon my patience may be better known. Still I have no excuse. I cannot forgive myself—'tis for that very cause I am so much indebted to those who are indulgent enough to do so.

Again and again thanking you for your most friendly note, I am, my dear sir, with cordiality and truth,

Yours always.

W. C. MACREADY.

Bunn did prosecute, but only in a civil court. Talfourd defended with ingenuity and humour. The straw which ultimately broke the camel's back of Macready's patience was, he said, Bunn's shameful mutilation of *Richard the Third*, in which Macready was appearing, by cutting off the last two acts, without further notice than the ad-

vertisement alluded to in Fox's letter. Macready must necessarily carry the two suppressed acts *in petto*, and the tragic passion thus pent up must inevitably discharge itself upon the nearest object, which by a lamentable chance happened to be Mr Bunn's head. Unfortunately the tragedian had gone to look for the head where it was most likely to be found, in the manager's own room. Bunn obtained £150 damages, but ere the action could be tried the enthusiastic reception accorded to Macready on his appearance at Covent Garden had shown that the public absolved him. On 26th May, Talfourd's *Ion* achieved a triumph for actor and author. Fox, it appears, was not present. The following letter is honourable to Macready's feeling of independence, although the nature of the "testimony" declined by him appears obscure:—

CHAMBERS.

May 24.

MY DEAR SIR,—I shall particularly regret your absence on the night of *Ion*, not that I feel any security of its success, but that I consider it as an experiment full of peculiar interest to minds like yours. I enclose you the paper you required, and in acknowledging and thanking you for the enclosed price that you have put upon the tickets, am obliged to explain to you that by a rule which I laid down for myself upon entering this profession, I do not allow myself the gratification of receiving testimonies of public or private regard, which my friends would wish to confer upon me. I am quite sure that you will understand that it only in conformity to a principle I have without exception acted upon that I deny myself the pleasure of being still more obliged to you, for I have a sincere delight in receiving benefits, or even the demonstration of regard, and I may most truly assure you that I am proud, as well as gratified, in the manifestations of esteem with which you honour me. There is no occasion, I feel confident, for further explanation on this point, but if there be, I will satisfy you upon it when I next have the pleasure of seeing you.

Sincerely and most heartily yours,

W. C. MACREADY.

Contrary to Macready's anticipation, the performance was a great success, and is memorable on two accounts, Browning's covenant at the supper which the author, more sanguine than the actor, had provided at his house in a spirit of faith and hope, to write a play for Macready : and for leading up to Macready's long and prosperous co-operation with Helen Faucit, who generously undertook the part of Clemanthe upon the original performer's, Ellen Tree's, retreat to the Haymarket. Ere long Ellen Tree was playing Ion himself. Macready thus records his opinion of the performance :

Miss Tree's performance of Ion is a very pretty effort, and a very creditable woman's effort, but it is no more like a young man than a coat and waistcoat.

—meaning, apparently, that there was nothing masculine in Miss Tree's presentment but her costume. Eliza Flower judged more favourably, and the impersonation of a male tragic character by an actress is so rare that it is worth while to place her opinion upon record. She says, writing to her friend Miss Bromley :

I do admire Miss Tree, in spite of her wretched mask of a face and love-sick tone of voice. The way in which she throws all the power that she has into whatever she does, and is herself carried away by it, is good and beautiful and affecting to look upon. To compare her with Macready is ridiculous, and yet she did some noble things in Ion, and looked death more truly. I suppose she was utterly exhausted ; it seemed that first night as though she had fainted, and I believe she did.

A description of Macready himself by Eliza Flower is of importance as it concerns what is generally unnoticed in accounts of a great actor, his by-play :

We saw his Brutus last night, that noble trusting spirit, gentlest and most human of all philosophers. I think his

by-play in the scene in the Capitol the most stirring thing I ever saw—as you said of the last act of Othello, “a poem in itself.” He sits by Cassius, but the furthest from Cæsar, and while the rest of those cold blooded conspirators are coldly watching Cæsar, who with the fresh laurel crown and in his kingly robes, is so proudly and unconsciously rejecting the suit of Cinna, he gazes on him, the triumphant show, the beloved friend whose “angel” is now deserting him, his face grows paler and paler, his heart sinks as he recalls the past, a look of anguish passes over his face, which grows calm again, though it continues sad, and he gently and as it seems unconsciously slides his hand into that of Cassius, which rests on the back of his chair, which he holds firmly for a minute, loosens the grasp, his features settle into deeper calm and his hand grasps the dagger.¹

The history of the performance of *Strafford* is fully recounted by Mrs Sutherland Orr, except that, the life of Helen Faucit being unpublished, she is unable to call one important witness :

I went home [says Miss Faucit] very sad, for although the play was considered a success, yet, somehow, even my small experience seemed to tell me it would not have a very long life.

In fact, she and Macready alone had saved it from condemnation. Macready had not yet taken a theatre, and the company, not yet a *corps dramatique* organised by himself, was most inefficient. Helen Faucit and Vandenhoff alone were competent ; the last-named disliked the play, and his abrupt retreat brought the performance to a close after the fifth night. A third of the piece, Browning says, had to be retrenched simply because the performers did not understand the text sufficiently

¹ Westland Marston (*Our Recent Actors*) mentions another instance of Macready's consummate by-play in *Gisippus*, when the forsaken lover, who has for a time joined his mistress's bridal procession, “lingers behind, sinks upon a bench, takes off his chaplet, gazes upon it wistfully ; then, with bowed head, lets it fall, with a sigh. The wreath seemed to drop on the grave of his illusions.”

to be able to speak it : a surprising statement, corroborated however by Eliza Flower's independent testimony that it was necessary to explain *impeachment* to some of them, they thought it meant *poaching*.

No wonder that as she told Sarah Fox :

Browning seems a good deal annoyed at the go of things behind the scenes, and declares he will never write a play again as long as he lives.

He did not therefore forget his obligations to his supporters, the published play was dedicated to Macready "with affectionate admiration," and two years afterwards, he thus wrote to Mrs Haworth concerning Fox :

The "Master" is somebody you don't know, W. J. Fox, a magnificent and poetical nature, who used to write in reviews when I was a boy, and to whom my verses, a bookful, written at the ripe age of twelve and thirteen, were shown : which verses he praised not a little ; which praise comforted me not a little. Then I lost sight of him for years and years, then I published anonymously a little poem—which he, to my inexpressible delight, praised and expounded in a gallant article in a magazine of which he was the editor ; then I found him out again ; he got a publisher for *Paracelsus* (I read it to him in manuscript) and is, in short, "my literary father." Pretty nearly the same thing did he for Miss Martineau, as she has said somewhere.

Another dramatist whose interest Fox strove to promote with Macready was R. H. Horne, whose *Cosmo di' Medici* treated of the tragic event in the family of the second Cosmo, first Grand Duke of Tuscany, upon which Alfieri's powerful tragedy *Don Garcia* is founded. The play must have been in Macready's hands at an early period of his acquaintance with Fox, for he writes from Manchester on 16th February 1835 :

I beg to thank you very warmly for the pleasure you have afforded me in the perusal of *Cosmo*. I ought to express my deep sense of obligation to you also for the partial motives that

induced you to favour me with this very superior production. It puzzles me to find expression for my opinion of its chances of success, that may not apparently justify that which I entertain of its merits. The objections I should have to urge, chiefly to the intermingling of the lighter scenes with the dark story of passion and crime are easily met ; and some recommendations which the practice of the stage would suggest, would, I am sure, not be opposed. But I think it right to say that although I would on no account alter the mode of Cosmo's death, I am by no means confident of its effect in representation. Still I would have no commonplace method of disposing of the principal character substituted for this grand but very perilous conception. *Magnis excidit ansis* will be at least a consolation under defeat, but let us hope for happier consequences. I beg to assure you that I fully concur in your admiration of the tragedy. The poetry, the deep insight into the human heart, and the terrific situations of the characters are evidences of no common mind.

In a subsequent letter dated 3rd April, Macready reiterates his objection to the comic scenes :

I refer to the test—which I frequently find a true one—I do not feel them. . . . There are [he adds] scenes of soliloquy which in any case are dangerous, and only, I think, to be hazarded in one single instance, if that indeed be an excuse for such an undramatic arrangement—viz., the first soliloquy of Garcia after the death of Giovanni. The others I take upon myself to warn the author, *must* be altered, they could not be ventured upon the their present form.

Horne, as was to be expected, was far from tractable about his comic underplot, and profoundly distrustful of Macready's motives for interfering with the part of another performer :—

4 CHARLOTTE STREET, RATHBONE PLACE.

DEAR SIR,—I don't see that it is absolutely necessary for me to meet Mr Macready, especially as I shall be *tough* for the comic parts that relieve the tragedy. I can, however, as his copy is no doubt marked, alter as much as possible if he leave it with

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you and state his case, viz., that, as I foresaw, he feels the character of Garcia would, if well done, divide the interest with Cosmo. The test he refers to against poor Comics, evading all argument, makes me laugh. It is placing the exception for the rule, because, as Lamb said to Mary, he has no relish for the comic. Did he ever feel a comic scene? Of course I knew his object would be to make the whole rest upon Cosmo, and it is—as a matter of common sense—my object that it should not. It could never succeed in representation, especially after the training Bunn has given the enlightened public. Mr Macready and myself must therefore come to a mutual accommodation. I will alter and leave out all I can, both in the serious and comic parts, but much less of the latter. I shall be happy to meet him any evening you may appoint, and promise to show no spleen at the destruction that I perceive must ensue. I will do anything except compromise the tragic principle (for my own soul's sake), or leave out all the comic, for my own judgment's sake. I will therefore meet him, and behave in my prettiest manner; but now you see clearly all about the relative positions, I can't help thinking you would manage the matter much prettier.

Yours truly,

R. H. HORNE.

Consentaneity was unattainable, and on 1st December, four days after he had met Horne at Fox's together with Browning, Macready returned the MS., persisting that the piece required "complete purification of the comic scenes, that interfere with and disturb the nobleness and grandeur of the tragedy."

Here Richard Garnett's work ends

As a dramatic critic Fox shows the same moral and mental earnestness and elevated ideals that distinguish him as a humanitarian and reformer. It would appear from the series of dramatic criticisms which he contributed to *The Morning Chronicle* in 1838 that the English drama not only suffered as modern drama suffers, from the meagre intellectual demands and æsthetic insensibility

of British audiences, but from aggravated commercialism. in the shape of a "theatrical monopoly" at Covent Garden and Drury Lane. In reviewing a translation of Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Literature*, in the *Statesman* in 1840, Fox says :

That monopoly is little else than a prohibition of any original drama, and of the recognised classical drama of our country. It reduces both actors and authors to a degrading dependence upon two managers—sometimes only on one. . . . What head can be made against the combination of cant and capital ?

Though the monopoly enjoyed by the managers of Covent Garden and Drury Lane theatres has long since been swept away, the English drama is still suffering from "cant and capital," but in many respects the state of the theatre was even more deplorable in the first than in the second half of the nineteenth century. The particular struggle, in which Fox lent Macready active assistance as *The Morning Chronicle's* critic, was the revival of poetic drama, and what Fox calls "The Restoration of Shakespeare." Macready's restoration of the genuine text and his adequate staging of Shakespearian drama was a public service deserving all the grateful praises his friendly critic showered upon him. Fox well says, in an article on "The Macready Management" at Covent Garden, dated 21st April 1839 :—

For almost two centuries the work of corruption had continued to make havoc with the grandest compositions of the grandest dramatist that the world has produced. The great and the contemptible, the poetical and the practical : Dryden and Davenant ; Garrick and Kemble ; Tate and Cibber, all were let loose upon the text of Shakespeare, like swarms of caterpillars, great and small, upon a rose-tree to impair and destroy and transform its loveliness into something akin with their own inferior natures. . . . Every petty, blushing stage-thunderer thought he knew better than Shakespeare what

would suit the taste of an audience. . . . Mr Macready first dared to believe in Shakespeare with his whole heart and soul. . . . The two most extensive and remarkable of those restorations are those accomplished in *The Tempest* and *King Lear*. . . . The public only knew in the acting version (of the former) a farrago of common conjuration and uncommon indecency. . . . (In *King Lear*) the feeling of the drama had been outraged by the impertinent interpolation of a love affair between *Edgar* and *Cordelia*. The construction of this drama had been destroyed by the total withdrawal of the *Fool*. And the catastrophe of the drama had been reversed! . . .

Whatever may be, relatively, the "corruption" of public taste to-day, we cannot conceive our dramatic critics arguing against the restoration of a Shakespearian drama on the ground that the current acting version is "seemingly irreversibly established by long prescription." Macready, by his success, shattered the ridiculous theatrical conventions of his time, and Fox in successive eulogies on his revivals of *The Tempest*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Coriolanus*, *King Lear*, and *Henry V.*, drove home the moral. His criticisms, making due allowance for his friendship with Macready, are sagacious and intelligent, a little didactic in tone, but more thorough and well-considered and certainly more scholarly than are most of the dramatic criticisms in the modern press. We see Fox's critical capacity perhaps to most advantage in his highly detailed strictures on Charles Kean's acting in Drury Lane theatre in 1838. While paying justice to the younger Kean's strength of passion and power of invective, the critic lays stress on the actor's want of "intellectual and imaginative guidance," and complains of his preference for "stage tricks" over any just comprehension of character. Charles Kean, with all his gifts, succeeded better in what may be called "the higher melodrama" than in genuine tragedy, and Fox's searching criticisms of the actor are illustrative of the hard struggle "intellectual and poetic" drama, represented by

Macready, was making against the vulgar demand of theatre-goers for the greatest number of stage effects that actors could crowd into their performances.

It is typical of Fox's mental outlook, and of the peculiar bias of the Victorian moral idealism he speaks for, that he should practically identify "the national drama" with "loftiness of aim," "moral grandeur," the noble productions of "poetic genius," "the simple and noble embodiments of the poetical imagination," etc. Such phrases and the like are always at the back of the critic's mind, if not always in his mouth, and they point to the ever-present division between the great majority of playgoers who seek only amusement, and the small minority of cultivated and over-serious people who wish to be edified. The Victorian "poetic drama" of Talfourd, Bulwer Lytton, Sheridan Knowles, Horne, and of many minor men, now utterly forgotten, did not, however, prevail. Candour impels us to acknowledge that it did not deserve to prevail as the "national drama." It is impossible to-day to read the much-admired *Ion* of Mr Sergeant Talfourd, of which Fox, with the over-moral bias of early Victorian outlook, writes: "It enshrines the purest spirit of Christianity in the gracefulest forms of ancient Greece. . . . Exquisitely poetical as is the play, and firm as is now its standing on the stage . . ." *Ion*, to-day, seems hopelessly flat, and "poetic" only in the conventional "noble" style. There is excuse for Fox in as much as the lofty pathos of these pseudo-classical plays seemed the one royal road of escape from the boisterous vulgarities of Buckstone and the popular school of Haymarket comedy. The brilliant paste of Bulwer Lytton's *Lady of Lyons* and *Richelieu* are naturally praised for the "pervading tone of sound moral and patriotic sentiment," and for their "philosophical and poetical qualities." No doubt Macready did as much for *Ion* and Knowles' *Virginus* and *William Tell* as Duse

does for Dumas' *La Dame aux Camellias*. Fox's sincerity and critical honesty are conspicuous in all his dramatic criticisms and reviews of books, and he never minces words in attacking the "chicanery, caprice and degrading insolence of the adventurers who have thrust themselves into theatrical managements," and debased the theatre.

At the close of his season at Covent Garden, in August 1839, Macready presented Fox with a silver snuff-box, as a mark of his gratitude for the latter's "fervour and friendship displayed with untiring zeal," and Fox replies that "you have been and are so idealised to me that demonstrations of personal regard are as if 'some bright particular star should commune with me on terms of reciprocity.'"

In a note dated 1st October (1841?) Macready writes concerning a new project, which would seem to contain the germs of a proposal for the opening of a new National Theatre.

I do think we should make out our own case. I really want to do *no more*. If the thing is to be a pure traffic of my toil for coin I cannot work—I should sink under the first reverse, I shall be content to exchange a certain amount of income for the realisation of a certain amount of good done.

On 23rd April 1842 we find the poet, George Darley, writing to thank Fox for his critique of "my luckless play of *Plighted Troth*," which "more than made amends for the heavy weight of disparagement imposed upon me in other quarters," Macready having failed in it, "dying" as a critic wrote, "amid the most uncritical laughter we ever heard in a theatre."

And a week later we have the first reference to Westland Marston's play of *The Patrician's Daughter*: "I must trouble you with a word for poor Marston," writes Fox to Macready. "Forster has frightened me by a hint of your change of purpose. It will be a heavy blow to that nervous being." The play was ultimately produced

on 10th December, but was only a "barren success," Macready on withdrawing it shortly afterwards writing to Fox :

I need not say to you that in fulfilling what I felt to be a *duty* in acting it I gave it every aid that experience could yield it, may I say too—pains and personal sacrifice . . . if I could act it without loss but I cannot do so without adding to that already incurred.

It was probably on Macready's presentation of *King John*, 24th October 1842, that the following undated letter of Fox was written :—

13 QUEEN SQUARE, WR.
Monday.

MY DEAR MACREADY,—You have seen that reptile atrocity in the *Chronicle* this morning, I suppose.—If anything in the form of criticism would demand the stoppage of orders, that would.

The *Post* has never been so bad. I hope this makes you understand (better than I fear I myself did, last night) what I mean by the state of the Press demoralising one into a partisan. One is disgusted, irritated, goaded into a fierce wish for instant means to tell the world how false, paltry, and dirty, such things are.

When I think of the cold and measured praise with which I have often recorded the most beautiful things ; when I read extravagant laudations ignorantly or corruptly bestowed on other performances, to bring which into comparison were an inconceivable absurdity ; when I see all proportion, all propriety, all principle trampled under foot in Theatrical Notices, amongst which my own have to be printed unmarked from the rest, and with no external certificate of honesty ; and I do feel for the moment at least, as if, under the circumstances only partisanship could be fair criticism. . . . What little I know of Dramatic Criticism has been chiefly learned in you, as the Ancients learned Poetical Criticism in Homer.

What there is of good and true in it is, therefore, necessarily a sort of sacrificial homage ; and it is quite befitting that, with

whatever pollutions surround it, and to the world's eye intermingled, the offering should be as pure as the flame by which it was enkindled.

Thank you for reminding me of this, in my seeming, but only seeming forgetfulness. God bless you.

Yours ever,

W. J. Fox.

In March of the following year Fox tells Macready that he has had "a severe shaking, but as it has shaken me free of the (Morning) *Chronicle* I do not repine," and introduces Mr P. A. Taylor, "who will be beseeching or besieging you to-day, for the Theatre for an Anti-Corn Law Gathering." The request was granted, and Fox publicly acknowledges the League's obligations to Macready three years later. Letters pass between the friends during Macready's American tour in 1844, the latter writing of "the wide-pouring floods, and the boundless plains, and the forests: . . . the littleness of man cannot contract the great destinies of that country though great endeavours are made by the Tylers and Calhouns and such infinitesimals," and there is a good description of Macready's sensations after reading in a League newspaper of "a Covent Garden meeting — Rochdale — cheers — Cobden, Bright, Fox. . . . I got up in bed and looked around me—thinking if not saying, 'Can I be actually in the city of Savannah Georgia, so many thousand miles from all I love?'"

In June 1845 Macready again reverts to his half-hatched project of a National Theatre, in the following letter:—

NORWICH,
June 4th, 1845.

MY DEAR FOX,—Your letter reaches me here. I am truly sensible of the kind feeling which the Members of the League entertain towards me and I appreciate it most highly: it is indeed most gratifying to me. But I fear in regard to Covent Garden, I shall not be able to avail myself of the helping hand

they stretch out towards me. I am almost—I may say I think *quite* convinced—that the drama cannot live in either of those Theatres, unless as in France and elsewhere, assisted by the government, which, with our place-men and with our indifference to the interests of literature and art I know to be impossible—To keep them open upon a rent you must have two or more companies—and those large and complete ones: if it, [Covent Garden Theatre] were *rent free*, if government would give it for a time or “under good behaviour” to a body—or a competent holding—we might then play three nights a week one company, and make it pay—but with a rent and its own *unavoidable* heavy expenses its tenure must be uncertain, and its responsibility would “break the heart of man and back of monster.” Could it be got out of the Proprietor’s hands? Could it be made really a National Theatre?—for *the drama* only? Could subscriptions and friends do that?—why it were a cause to die in. But—“alas! for my drama, her pride is gone by.”

Always sincerely and affectionately yours,

W. C. MACREADY.

In October and November 1846 Macready writes, supplying some biographical details which Fox had requested for his article in *The People’s Journal* (March 1847) on Macready’s life and genius, “Be merciful, be pitiful, forgive us mighty Fox.” In this appreciation Fox puts together the gist of his *Morning Chronicle* criticisms, declaring that the great actor’s powers were based on his capacity for making a profound study of character:

The philosopher has studied the being whom the artist delineates. Tone, gesture and demeanour are evolved from the conception of character. . . . Hence a truth and unity, the influence of which is felt by many who are utterly unconscious or regardless of the cause. The effect is analogous to that of the perfect proportions of a Greek temple. . . . Appeal is made to the sense of harmony, proportion and unity within us.

It is somewhat melancholy to discover that while more than sixty years ago Fox discussed in his article Macready's proposal for the endowment of a national theatre, then, as since, the objection that blocked the way was that "the charm is wanted of a promising speculation for pecuniary profit." The very same arguments that were to be used by Matthew Arnold a generation later, and are being used by the promoters of the National Shakespeare Theatre scheme to-day, were advanced by Fox, in the most happy phrases :

The great agencies of civilisation are rarely called into existence commercially. The previous want which they supply is not the conscious want of the masses to be elevated, but the want of those who strongly feel the desirableness of that elevation, and who perceive the means by which it may be accomplished. . . . When the process needs resources ordinarily beyond the reach of individuals, that collective power which we term the State should interpose. . . . So far as the very conception of a national theatre exists in the public mind, it is the suggestion of Mr Macready's management. But long years often pass between thoughts and deeds. . .

The particular heavy stupidity of the English official mind whenever it is a question of State encouragement of Science and Art was not affected in Fox's time, nor in Matthew Arnold's, nor seemingly, is it affected in our own, by all the eloquence of our wisest heads. It is left to the collective enthusiasm of a number of men all bent on the same idea, to realise the project of a "national theatre." But though it was not Fox himself who originated the idea it is entirely characteristic of his width of outlook and fervent temperament that he should have championed the project when the majority indifferently held aloof.

The relations between the great actor and his critic continued warm and unchanged, and lasted till Fox's death. In a long series of Macready's letters (1840-1864) we see the two friends confiding their domestic cares and dis-

cussing various social and political topics of the hour. Thus we find Macready arranging to come and bring two members of his family to stay with Fox during his own public farewell to the stage in February 1851; a touching note in September 1853 on Macready's "store of sorrows" and family bereavements; and similar intimate passages in correspondence on Fox's own concerns. As our space will only allow us to quote one specimen of these letters, all characteristic of the close intimacy between the friends, we select almost the last of the long series, called forth by Fox's retirement from his Oldham constituency in 23rd April 1862:—

6 WELLINGTON SQUARE, CHELTENHAM,
April 23, 1862.

MY DEAR FOX,—I have this day received an Oldham paper conveying to me the unwelcome intelligence that you have relinquished the representation of that good English town. Although these retirements one way or other, must come, there is a sadness in submitting to this necessity—I mean more particularly on the part of friends, for with the principal in general the measure has been long contemplated and the idea having grown familiar to him, he has become reconciled to it. But to me, as one of your warmest friends, it is a melancholy measure though I have the satisfaction of congratulating you upon the honour that attends you in taking it.

For myself I am growing more and more useless, and yet duties seem to grow upon me as my ability to discharge them waxes less and less.

The newspapers and periodicals seem to run away with my life, and shorten the days, that at their longest do not give the time needful for what I wish to do. Will the ensuing summer see you in Cheltenham? I have a dreamy sort of half-wish, half-purpose of making an effort to see the Grand Exhibition, but I expect I shall turn craven at the last and find some excuse for remaining at home. Katie sends her kind love to you. Mrs Macready her best regards. With mine to Mr and Mrs Bridell, I remain, my dear Fox, always most affectionately, Yours,
W. C. MACREADY.

CHAPTER IX

FOX—THE ANTI-CORN-LAW LEAGUE AND SOCIAL REFORM

THE years 1840-1850 that saw Fox one of the most prominent orators of the Anti-Corn-Law League, leader writer in the *Morning Chronicle*, and later, in *The Daily News* under Forster, a lecturer to the working classes (1844-1846), M.P. for Oldham (1840) and the introducer of a bill for establishing compulsory secular education (1850), are the most important in his long life of public activity. An examination of the copious journalistic writings in *The League*, *The Daily News*, *The Weekly Dispatch*, etc., which he poured forth for the next twenty years (1840-1861) proves that Fox might have taken an important place in history as a Social Reformer could he have concentrated his energies and laid down a practical programme for Radicals to follow. But the times were confused, and circumstances were not propitious. As has been pointed out by the late William Clark, the powerful Democratic Movement of 1820-1850, which came to a head in the Chartist fiasco of 1848, was overlaid and finally smothered by the successful propaganda of the Manchester school, and by the impetus that Free Trade gave to the national prosperity. There were, in fact, two movements merging into one, the people's movement against upper-class and middle-class domination, and a manufacturers' town-sprung movement against the landed proprietors. Cobden and Bright, with the cry of "Cheap Food" diverted the stream of democratic demands, and caused it to flow for two genera-

tions into middle-class Liberal channels. And it is only to-day that the Labour and Socialist movement (1909) is spreading wide, to carry out the programme for social re-organisation that was implicit in the early Radical propaganda of men such as Francis Place. In Fox himself all these seeds of democratic feeling had long been germinating ; a perusal of his speeches and writings show that he was constantly spreading them abroad, ripened, but they fell on soil not especially prepared to receive them. His process of self-education had taught him to attach the greatest importance to the necessity of cultivating the morals and enlarging the intellectual outlook of the working classes : he shared to the full, indeed he incarnated the typical Victorian illusion that with the spread of Education, with the blessing of Science, an enlightened Press, cheap food and adequate parliamentary representation, a golden age must dawn for the people ; and he had lost, by his lifelong achievement of working himself free from the trammels of dogmatic religion, the opportunity that might have fallen to him as a democratic leader. In Fox indeed met and harmonised in an unusual degree all the liberal, emancipating movements of his generation. He was a Free-thinker in the widest sense of the word, a religious teacher of morals, an educationalist, a Radical propagandist, a literary journalist, a Corn-law reformer, and a man of the people at heart. And because he was all these things, because he gathered up and reflected back to a popular audience all the floating social Liberalism of his time, because he did not concentrate his energies and specialise in one branch, he is now almost forgotten. For his popularity he has paid in full the penalty that falls to even great journalists and to all but the greatest orators. Had Fox resigned his ministry at Finsbury Chapel, in 1834, when the dissatisfied section of his congregation censured him for " unchristian " morality, he might, as Place wrote of Hume in 1840, " have become emphatically

the people's man," and we have W. J. Linton's testimony to this effect in his *Memoir of James Watson*.

W. J. Fox . . . the virtual founder of that new school of English radicalism, which looked beyond the established traditions of the French revolution, and, more poetical, escaped the narrowness of Utilitarianism : a man wiser than his compeers, who for lack of boldness (perhaps accounted for by his physique) had been the royal leader of the English democracy.

Early in 1840, Fox delivered a series of three lectures on the Socialistic scheme of Robert Owen, which, judging from the following letter, were by no means satisfactory to the person most concerned : —

Mr Owen presents his compliments to Mr Fox and desires to inform him that from the lecture which Mr Owen heard from Mr Fox on Sunday week and from the report which he has received of the lecture which Mr Fox delivered last Sunday he is obliged to conclude that before Mr Fox can understand the system advocated by Mr Owen he has yet to study the three Sciences on which it is based and to make himself master of the four great departments of life before he can be prepared to give a just exposition of it to his audience or before he or any literary person can know what *is* or what *is not* practicable in a state of society so different from the present as the Rational System is by Mr Owen stated to be.

Mr Owen proposed to Mr Fox on Sunday week, in his vestry-room, to send correct documents to enable him to understand, as far as anyone without practical knowledge can understand, the system which Mr Owen recommends for the general adoption of society, but Mr Fox then requested Mr Owen would delay this communication until Mr Fox had delivered his three lectures on Socialism as Mr Fox then understood it. To prevent Mr Fox proceeding further in error on this system Mr Owen takes the liberty to send him a proof copy of a work about to be published in a few days and also to add that if Mr Fox will appoint a time to call upon Mr Owen with any number of Mr Fox's more experienced practical friends, they shall have explained to them the drawings of arrangements for an entirely new condition of society—one in which, the

producer of wealth shall be placed in a much better state for the enjoyment of life from birth to death than any class or individuals can experience under the existing disorder and confusion of a society divided in mind and interest against itself. And this new state shall be maintained at a less expense of labour and capital than the present system requires.

As no one, for want of the requisite experience, can explain this new system except its founder, Mr Owen requests the use of Mr Fox's Chapel in which to deliver a Course of three or four lectures for this purpose when convenient to Mr Fox and the Chapel Committee ; but Mr Owen has no desire to diminish or in any way to interfere with the funds of the Committee.

If not unpleasant to Mr Fox Mr Owen begs he will read this note to his congregation :

" 4 CRESCENT PLACE, BURTON CRESCENT,
" 27th Feb. 1840.

" Time will not allow Mr Owen to correct the proof but very imperfectly and he wishes it to be returned on Monday when or soon after Mr Fox shall have a corrected copy."

The earliest reference in his correspondence to Fox's attitude on the Corn Laws that we have found is in two letters of Colonel Perronet Thompson to Fox in September 1838, stating that he has undertaken to supply *The Sun* newspaper with a series of articles entitled "Corn Law Fallacies with their Answers," and thanking him for his co-operation. Thompson adds that he is "afraid my connection with *The Sun* in this instance will expose me to the suspicion of being 'art and part' in the supposed intention to make a diversion from the objects of the Working Classes on Universal Suffrage etc."

Evidently Fox felt it necessary later on to vindicate himself from the same charges, as we find him declaring, in his speech at Liverpool, October 1843 :—

I have written and spoken on this question before there was any pretext whatever for calling it a manufacturer's question—

before the League was in existence even in thought—before any individual of the capitalist Classes had taken up the matter.

The Chartist meeting of 17th September 1838 in Palace Yard, at which Colonel Thompson spoke, was attended by Fox but *The Morning Chronicle* does not report that Fox spoke. Fox always strongly repudiated the “physical force” side of Chartism as represented then and later on by Feargus O'Connor, and it was as a moral and intellectual reformer among the Radicals that he supported the London Working Men's Association, started in 1837 by William Lovett, which, as Mr Graham Wallas tells us in his *Life of Francis Place*, was derided by O'Connor as not being composed of working men at all. The imprisonment of the Chartist leaders of 1839-1840 for their abortive “rising” in the North probably helped Fox to the belief that the repeal of the Corn Laws was the leading reform to be worked for. Though sympathetic to the five points of “The People's Charter” Fox's sympathies became more platonic when the chartists began to break up the Anti-Corn Law meetings all over the country. There is an interesting passage in *The Life of Thomas Cooper* which describes how a Chartist lecturer in 1840 urged his audience not to be led away from their adherence to the People's Charter by the Corn Law Repealers :—

“Not that Corn Law Repeal is wrong,” said he. “When we get the Charter, we will repeal the Corn Laws and all the other bad laws. But if you give up your agitation for the Charter to help the Free Traders, they will not help you to get the Charter. Don't be deceived by the Middle Classes again. You helped them to get their votes—you swelled their cry of ‘The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill!’ But where are the fine promises they made you?”

“Gone to the winds! They said when they had gotten their votes, they would help you to get yours—All other reforms the Whigs boast to have effected have been for the benefit of the Middle Classes—not for yours. And now they want to get the

Corn Laws repealed—not for your benefit—but for their own. ‘Cheap Bread!’ they cry. But they mean ‘Low Wages.’ Do not listen to their cant and humbug. Stick to your Charter, you are veritable slaves without your votes.”

Of the desperate state of the labouring classes in the “hungry forties” it is difficult now to form any adequate conception. “Despair settled down not only on our artizans, but on our thinkers,” as Mr Holland Rose puts it, after quoting Dr Arnold’s words to Thomas Carlyle in January 1840: “The state of society in England was never yet paralleled in history.” The worst of those formidable years lay behind, but no substantial amelioration of their misery was yet felt by the working classes. Looking back sixty years one recognises that there was more ground for the hostility of the irreconcilable Chartists to the Free Trade movement than our middle class historians will allow: the middle classes by its aid ensconced themselves firmly in the seat of political power. Fox himself took the middle course in identifying the interests of employer and employed. A year after the final collapse of “physical force” Chartism in 1848, he wrote *Counsels to the Working Classes* :—

A class has risen up amongst you who get their living by agitation and organisation. They toil, not with their hands, but with their tongues. The beer-shop is their factory and home. The loom and the plough know them not; yet they always affect to speak in the name of the working classes. Their harangues glitter with pikes, and smell of gunpowder, although they generally contrive to keep out of harm’s way. They drill you to clamour, and would drill you to blood and plunder, could they do it safely. . . . They are fed by your enemies or pretended friends, to make tools and fools of you for selfish purposes.

By yourselves were the Corn Laws first denounced. Before ever the manufacturers of Manchester took to the study of Adam Smith, or found practical and touching elucidations of

his doctrines in their ledgers you had on the soundest principles, proclaimed war against the food monopoly. And yet when the great body of the middle-class flocked around that same banner which you had raised, there were those among you who stood aloof, questioned their motives, disturbed their meetings, and struggled hard to prevent their triumph, and to forfeit your right share in its celebration. Such persons would, if they could, have done yet worse, and prevented the accomplishment of that triumph. This deepest and darkest degradation you happily escaped.

Fox does not appear to have had direct relations with Cobden till 1840, when the latter wrote twice to Mr Peter Taylor, urging him to secure Fox's services in the following matter :—

MANCHESTER,

4 May, 1840.

MY DEAR SIR,—At the Council of the League we were talking to-day about an address which ought to be put forth, by the Committee that is to assemble during Villier's motion, after his motion has been lost. It was decided to apply to Mr Fox as the only man capable of doing justice to such an address, and we shall be glad if you will apply to him in our behalf. The terms of course must be left to himself. We don't want the question to be argued, but to be taken up on the primitive ground of right and justice. We don't wish it to be treated as a manufacturer's question, not a capitalist's either ; but as a *bread-tax*, that robs all the community for the clumsy expedient of putting a mere fraction of the booty into the pockets of the robbers. The object of the address should be, to stir up the community to active resistance against a law that degrades us as worse than slaves in the eyes of the world.

Then the religious and moral feelings must be appealed to, and the energies of the Christian world must be drawn forth by the remembrance of the Anti-Slavery, and other struggles, and by being reminded that the cause of truth and justice must prosper in the end. The people must be told that there is no hope from the present House of Commons which refused to allow corn to be ground in bond—and which also refused to the

Irish to import foreign flour at a time when their own flour was breeding typhus fever !

Then the people should be told that the country's salvation must be worked out at the hustings and the polling-booths. We may also glance at the despair which is seizing the minds of many and the desperate courses to which men are driven. The increase of the armed military and civil forces to restrain the people might be referred to, and the expense and insecurity of such a state of things may be urged as an argument with the middle and wealthy classes for giving content to the people by allowing them to be fed.

We don't want a *long* address—but it must be a blister to the aristocracy and the House of Commons.

Will you oblige me by dropping me a line by return to say what you have done. There is not time to throw away—the address will be wanted by the fifteenth.

I remain, my dear Sir, yours very truly,

R. COBDEN.

MANCHESTER,

8th May 1840.

MY DEAR SIR,—The only ulterior means that can be pointed to, for effecting the total repeal of the Corn Law, is, by continued appeals; by all constitutional means, to the people. Such are our only means, and only end, as an Anti-Corn Law League. I think nothing should be said about political changes—I mean Suffrage, ballot, etc. We are not in a position to do any good for the cause of democratic progression *as a League*—except by battering at that which after all is the Citadel of aristocratic misgovernment, the Corn Law. Mr Fox may and doubtless will appeal to all classes for co-operation—for all are bread-eaters. The rich should be called upon to give money. The ministry of religion should be called upon to offer prayers for the conversion of the legislature. Individual co-operation, throughout the Kingdom, should be invoked by distributing tracts, aiding and facilitating the lecturers etc. The poor should be invited to attend our lectures.

We think that the address should magnify as much as possible the present power and the rapid growth of the Anti-Corn Law League. We are now prepared for another year's agitation, with double the funds, and a double staff of lecturers as compared with last year.

Eighteen months ago the movement had its birth in the wrongs of a few manufacturers who were seeking to be relieved from injuries inflicted upon their own peculiar interests. The question has now been taken up by men of all pursuits, and all classes and sects, and the repeal of the Corn Law is no longer called for to benefit the manufacturer *but as a measure of justice to all*. A solemn declaration should be made that the League would persevere till justice was obtained.

We think that *Ireland* should be especially addressed. Some of us think that a *separate* address should be made to that country. At all events especial attention must be given to her case. Our lecturers are now making their way in Ireland with prodigious effect. They have just begun to agitate that country, and are surprised at the success everywhere met with. We have sent an address to every one of the Catholic clergy, and are receiving daily great numbers of answers promising hearty co-operation. In fact Ireland will be a trump card in our hands.

In our last Circular we invite Constituencies, wishing to get rid of bread-taxing representatives, to put themselves in communication with the council of the League. Something of this sort might be delicately hinted at in the address. At all events, we must denounce all those who voted for a tax on bread, and call on the constituencies to be prepared to return in their places men who will vote for the total abolition of the tax. I think it is better to use the word bread-tax than the corn-law. A *bread-tax* is a good term to fix upon our opponents.

These points will serve as hints to Mr Fox. He knows better perhaps than anybody else, how to make the most of them. I think you should lose no time in seeing Mr Fox and communicating the substance of this to him.

Believe me, yours very truly,

R. COBDEN.

How would it do if we were to warn farmers against taking leases?

The "blister to the aristocracy and the House of Commons" was issued on 27th May 1840, and from an entry in Fox's account-book we find that £10 was paid him by the League—decidedly cheap for the amount of moral steam that Cobden's instructions had led him to generate:

THE DEPUTIES OF THE NATIONAL ANTI-CORN LAW LEAGUE TO
THE PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Fellow Countrymen,—Your prayers for untaxed bread have again been rejected by those who call themselves your representatives. The voice of justice is not yet loud enough. The signatures of a million and a half of petitioners are not numerous enough. The union of the middle and working classes is not yet compact enough. The cry must be more piercing, and the effort more strenuous, before the sinister indifference of a legislative majority gives way to the wants of a nation and the claims of everlasting justice.

The vote of the House of Commons is only a temporary postponement, not a final decision. The Creator of the earth, when He endowed it with fertility, ordained that man should obtain bread by the sweat of his brow. The corn monopoly interferes to prevent that result. It forbids the industrious to receive the food they have earned, should it have been grown on a foreign soil. It contravenes their right to live by the labour of their hands. It violates a law of God and nature; and no human authority has the actual power, any more than the moral right, to render such a violation perpetual.

The doom of the bread tax is pronounced. The infamous impost must perish beneath the universal execrations of the people. The utmost power of Parliament can only prolong its death struggle. It can no more survive than did the slave trade the general sentiment of righteous abhorrence. As against those who profited by the sale of their fellow creatures, so against those who profit by the starvation of their fellow creatures must the moral power of enlightened perseverance finally prevail. The House of Commons has only achieved a brief respite for the most atrocious of monopolies.

But in that brief respite how much of mischief will be perpetrated, and how much of misery endured? etc., etc.

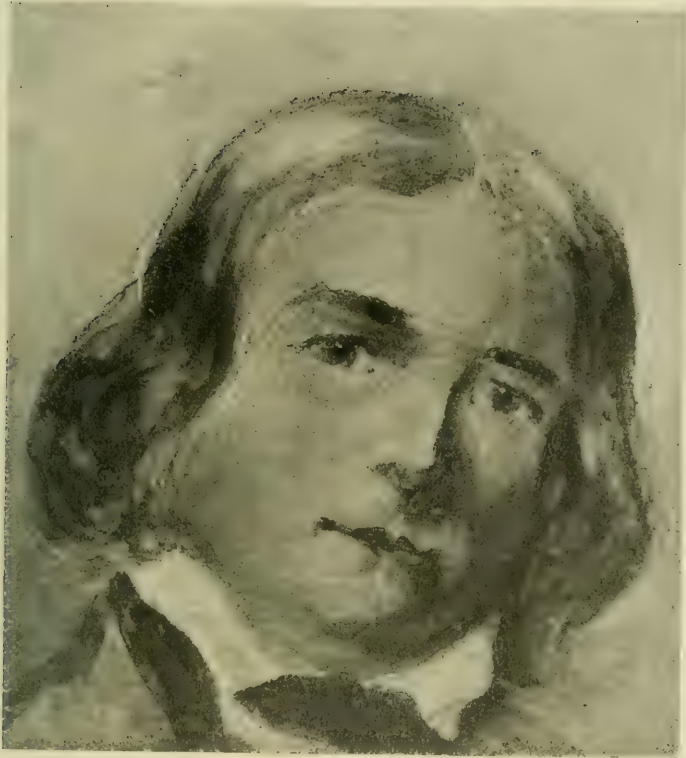
Nothing much seems to have been done by the London Anti-Corn-Law Committee for over a year if we are to judge by Place's testimony (*Life of Francis Place* p. 395), but on 30th March 1842 Fox was paid another £10 for a second "Address," and on 18th February 1843

we find him resigning his post on the *Chronicle*, for work in the League. In a letter to his mother he says :

You saw the Chapel advertisement for Sunday I suppose. Cobden was there and several of the leaders of the League.

In this month began Fox's regular engagement with the League, by which he attended at the London office daily and became its paid lecturer and writer. In September 1843, Fox took his place as one of the leading orators of the Anti-Corn-Law movement. His first triumph is thus recorded by Mongredien (*History of the Free Trade Movement*, p. 9899) :

On September 28 [1843] the first public meeting by the League at Covent Garden took place. Mr George Wilson, as permanent chairman, presided. Every part of the vast area was crowded to excess. Richard Cobden, and after him Mr Bright, spoke and their admirable and effective speeches elicited universal applause. Then came forward a round-faced, obese man, of small stature, whom (if you avoided looking at his eyes) you might take to be a person of slow comprehension and slow of utterance—a sleek, satisfied, perhaps sensual person—a calm patient, and somewhat lethargic man. The only thing remarkable about him (always excepting his eyes) was a mass of long, thick, black hair, which waved over his neck and shoulders. This man spoke, and the vast audience was thrilled by his wonderful eloquence. It was W. J. Fox, the Unitarian minister, afterwards member for Oldham. The moment he began to speak he seemed another man. His large brown eyes flashed fire, and his impressive gesture added dignity to his stature. His voice displayed a combination of power and sweetness not surpassed even by the mellow bass tones of Daniel O'Connell in his prime. His command of language seemed unlimited, for he was never at a loss, not only for a word, but for the right word. Not argumentative and persuasive like Cobden, or natural and forcible as Mr Bright, his forte lay rather in appealing to the emotions of his audience ; and in this branch of the rhetorician's art his power was irresistible.



W. J. FOX
(After a crayon sketch)

It was of this speech particularly that Guizot wrote in his *Memoirs of Sir Robert Peel* :

(P. 123) When an idea has thus become transformed into a passion and a virtue, when the element of truth which it contains thus completely effaces and obliterates the objections which it excites and the other truths which limit it, deliberation ceases, discussion is at an end, action only is thought of, its partizans march, dash onwards.

(P. 242) Nothing is more effective than to direct men at the same time that you serve their passions and promote what they consider to be justice ; the speeches of Mr W. J. Fox at Covent Garden Theatre produced an immense effect and contributed as greatly as those of Mr Cobden in the House of Commons to make the League daily more popular and more powerful.

In the League reports of the meetings at Covent Garden we find that " loud cries were raised for Mr Fox," when the latter was not announced to speak, and that when he had addressed the audience, that " Mr Fox resumed his seat amid deafening applause which lasted for several minutes etc." In a letter dated 2nd April 1883, to Fox's son, Franklin, John Bright testifies :

Your father was the " orator " of the League, his speeches as compositions were far better than mine—but he did not speak often.

And an examination of his speeches leads to the same conclusion. Fox showed remarkable boldness in his denunciations of the vested interests of the " monopolist classes " and in ridiculing their right to levy and maintain a bread-tax on the whole nation. Their finest passages are inspired by the feeling of a broad humanity and by an indignant sympathy with the sufferings of the poor man. The three strings to Fox's bow as an orator were, a genuine humanitarianism, moral fervour and shrewd common sense, and these, combined with his power of hard-hitting

and his preacher's knack of beginning the combat with Providence on his side, were irresistible. It is however in his moral boldness that Fox shines most. Very few men could have carried through successfully the following parallel :—

They [the aristocracy] trade in fish and peasants, in ground for gambling-booths upon race-courses ; nay, they also lose their money in the races themselves ; and then bring in an act of Parliament to suspend the payment of their penalties. (*Cheers.*) They trade in stars, garters and ribbons—especially blue ones, and, what is worst of all, they trade in that legislation by which their business is made more profitable : they are hucksters with the power of law-making for an enhancement of their prices. (*Cheers.*) A great outcry has been raised against the petty cheap linendraper who teaches his apprentice-boy to “shave the ladies” (*loud laughter*) while these noble legislators do infinitely worse than that, for they shave the nation, and the poor they shave the closest and hardest of all. Their fallacies, have been exposed, and though they be not the original authors yet are they the real patrons of the doctrines of *The Morning Post*—the connection of which with incendiarism Mr Cobden has so luminously traced—it is still their doctrine. *Rickburning in practice is only Richmondism in theory.* (*Prolonged and vehement cheering.*) Nor was there ever a more complete parallel than that between the Richmondites and the rick-burners. If the one wantonly destroys property ; so does the other ; if the one endangers human life, why human life has been more than endangered by the other, and that too by wholesale, by these abominable starvation laws. If, in the rickburner's case, the innocent suffer, who are they that are injured in the other case but the unoffending, poor, and helpless—their suffering being greater the more helpless their position in society ? If the one destroys the good gifts of Heaven to man, so does the other. It is highly probable that a much greater quantity of corn than these fires in Suffolk and the adjoining counties have destroyed, has, in the course of years, been rotting under lock and key in bond, and has at last been shovelled out into rivers or harbours, as we know was recently the case at Hull, where a considerable quantity, even within a very few months, has been thus destroyed. (*Hear.*) And

where, I pray, is the mighty difference in the element of destruction? Why should it be villainous to destroy corn by fire and virtuous to destroy it by water? (*Loud cheers.*)

Speech on August 7, 1844, at Covent Garden Theatre.

That Fox was broadly justified in drawing this parallel was known to every member of his audience who were following day by day the fresh revelations made by the newspapers of the state of misery prevailing in every county—a state intensified a year later by the horrors of the Irish famine, and the failure of the crops in many parts of England. Fox himself could speak with absolute sincerity of “that earnest desire which has possessed me through life, to do something for obtaining the rights and improving the condition of the industrious many, amongst whom I was born and bred”; and this claim qualified him to compose the fifty-eight “Letters on the Corn Laws” by “A Norwich Weaver-Boy” which appeared in *The League* from 5th October 1844 to March 1846. As pieces of journalism they were highly effective, since they reiterate in popular controversial style the most powerful argument in the mouths of the Leaguers, “England is a great poor-house, you, the landed gentry, are the guardians, and deal in like manner with its bread.” Fox was particularly happy in his ridicule of great landlords such as the Duke of Richmond who moved in the House of Lords, 4th March 1845, “to expunge all those clauses which were for the benefit of the untaxed foreigner, and brought ruin upon farmers’ labourers and their families.” He sarcastically congratulates the Northamptonshire labourers on signing parish petitions for agricultural protection; “all right, provided that you have too much meat and are in danger of over-eating.” “Sir James Graham tells us that 1,500,000 persons are receiving work-house relief. . . . Sir Charles Knightley’s fears and troubles are endless: ‘For his own part he did

not see in what way it would be possible to prevent this market from being glutted with foreign meat.' Oh, horrible, you hungry dogs ; think of the misery of being 'glutted with foreign meat !' Shout against that, at the duke's bidding ; petition against that, at the duke's bidding." Any stick is good enough to beat a dog with, and Fox, like his fellow Leaguers, presses all the economic phenomena of the "forties" into service against the landlords. The chief fallacy in the mouths of the Free Traders, and that helped incidentally to make their doctrines prevail, was their pleasing belief that "Free Trade means employment for all," manifestly as provisional a truth as the rival creed that "Protection means employment for all." But in times of acute national distress the cry "Employment for all" must carry the day against the defenders of the *status quo*, and much the same zeal that inspired Fox and the early readers of the Manchester School, justified by the great expansion of British industries after 1850, is now furbishing the weapons of the Tariff Reformer. Along with Cobden and Bright, Fox showed great tactical instinct in emphasising that "Free Trade was a cause of national interest" but, at heart more a democrat than they, he was stirred by the whole struggle of the masses for social justice. And as a "man from the people" he pressed home this issue, while as a minister he made it a moral issue :

It is indeed a moral question. We give our opponents all the advantages they boast of possessing ; they have enormous property and influence ; Houses of Lords and Commons ; a large portion of the press ; the use of the Post Office (*cheers*) ; the patronage of the army and navy ; appointments in the church and its influence at their back ; they have all those and their enumeration does not appal one : for we have against them all—what is stronger than all put together—the sense of justice in the human heart. (*Cheers.*)

Speech on August 10th, 1844 at Covent Garden Theatre.

In his "Letters by a Norwich Weaver-Boy" Fox attacked the inconsistency of Lord Ashley, afterwards Lord Shaftesbury who "advocated a Ten-Hours' Factory Bill and opposed the repeal of the Corn-Laws," Harriet Martineau (*History of the Peace*, Book vi.) fell foul of the philanthropist for the same reason :

He constituted himself the champion of the Lancashire operatives whose families had been earning £3 a week . . . while he need but have gone into the hovels of his father's peasantry to have seen misery and mental and moral destitution which could not be matched in the worst retreats of the manufacturing population.

But in his letter to E. Moses and Son (No. xi.) the most renowned slop-sellers and sweaters in England, Fox is apparently conscious that his special pleading : "Out of the fearfully-earned 6d. a day of the famishing needlewomen, Lord Ashley and the landowners take 2d. by their Bread-tax," might be the prelude to a general indictment of the industrial system. It was clear, at the end of 1845, that the Free Trade Movement of the "forties" was irresistible because the whole body of the people stood to gain by cheap food. The Irish famine had done its work. In his speech at Covent Garden Theatre in December 1845, John Bright describes how the League orators were received with the utmost enthusiasm by the Wiltshire labourers, these "heart-broken, spirit-broken, despairing men who have been accustomed to this from their youth and see nothing in the future that affords a single ray of hope," and nothing was easier than for the League orators to expose the hollow arguments of the landowners such as the Duke of Richmond who threatened to leave the country if the Corn-Laws were repealed !—or such as one of the members for Wiltshire who declared that "if he had to come into the world again he would choose to be an agricultural labourer."

We get amusing glimpses of the work in the League in Fox's letters of Miss Flower. Thus in February 1844 when moving into his new quarters in Charlotte Street, where he stayed for about ten years, Fox writes :

The League office is become perfectly horrible since the main body of the Goths and Vandals came up from Manchester ; it is worse than living in a factory. . . . I do think it rather hard that I should not be able to foresee a comfortable bed to lie upon in the night between journeying after speaking and lecturing at the Chapel. My lungs have plainly got into a more susceptible state which I ascribe to the country journeys and meetings. I do not think Covent Garden hurts them at all.

Fox never appears to have been on intimate terms with Cobden, and probably his readiness to take his own independent line produced some irritation between the two men. In June 1844 Fox writes :

I had a delicate and difficult thing to do last night, which I did.

The Peel Ministry has been very nearly broken up by some close divisions in the House, but for the votes of Cobden and a few others connected with the League, Peel would have been out on Monday. I think them quite wrong in this, and determined not to be identified with it ; and so, without attacking Cobden (except by implication) I protested against it, for myself and declared that the Meeting was in sympathy with me, to which they responded with a round of applause.

There I left the matter : having just done enough to show that I could have done as much more as I pleased ; but I do not think Cobden will ever forget it. He was very sullen afterwards. Many told me the line was exactly hit of clearing myself and the Meeting without any offensiveness.

We have the last glimpse of the League in July 1846 :

I went to the League office to-day I suppose for the last time, nobody there but the subordinates, the hall full of packages, everything telling of the League that was. I seem myself to have lost a certain quantity of power and vitality. The day

work for the Paper, with no heart in it, is a very flat thing to those Covent Garden meetings. 'Twas something to put on one's coat once a week to go there. The only comfort is to be out of that eternal one idea, and not to see Corn-Law here, there, and everywhere.

In April 1842 Fox wrote for "The Metropolitan Parliamentary Reform Association" an "Address to the People of Great Britain," declaring that the time had now come to demand a new Reform Bill.

We aim at obtaining a vote for every man, free voting, proportionate representation, and responsible parliaments, that the nation may be well governed. . . . It is obviously vain any longer to put your trust in political parties, or seek relief from the guidance of party leaders. For real representation we associate ; for nothing else, and for nothing less.

The Metropolitan Parliamentary Reform Association, says Mr Graham Wallas, "lived exactly twelve months" and the "agreement between the enfranchised and the disfranchised on which further extension of the suffrage depended, did not come till 1867." In September 1842 we find Fox, in one of his weekly lectures, defending the young free-thinker, J. G. Holyoake, who had written to him from Gloucester Jail, asking him what he thought of the Christianity that put him there for the expression of his honest conviction. Holyoake had publicly denied "the existence of a superintending providence," and for this he was convicted and sentenced to a term of imprisonment ! The bigotry of the "forties" was indeed no less amazing than the religious hypocrisy of the "eighties" that Bradlaugh challenged and overthrew.

In February 1838, we find Fox writing to his mother at Norwich :

None of the Daily papers, however, are Radical enough for me at present, so I am only writing Literary and Dramatic notices in the *Morning Chronicle*,

Early in 1839, the proprietor, Sir John Easthope, with whom Fox became intimate, launched out on bolder and more popular lines, and Fox obtained a regular engagement as leader writer, under the editor, John Black, which lasted till February 1843, when we find him again writing to his mother :

I would rather give it up altogether (unless they will offer me an engagement for less work) and trust to the profits of week night lecturing and Review writing (in addition to the Chapel).

At this date Fox was compelled to leave the furnished house in Queen Square, Westminster, which he had shared for three years with Mr and Mrs Adams and Miss Flower, and take chambers for himself in Duke Street, St James, and lodgings for his little daughter, Tottie, and Miss Flower in Bayswater Road. Thence they all removed to Southampton Street, Fitzroy Square, and in February 1844 to No. 4 Charlotte Street, Bedford Square, which was to remain his home for many years. On 12th May 1844, Fox commenced a series of Sunday Evening Popular Lectures to the Working Classes, at the National Hall, Holborn, a building, capable of seating nearly 2000 people, which was the outcome of the Chartist Lovett's *National Association*. The National Hall (opened "with a public festival" in July 1842), where Lectures and Classes were held by Ellis, J. H. Parry, Thomas Cooper, Fox, Purfitt, etc., is, to-day, a monument to the vicissitudes of the democratic faith in London, as it now survives as a music hall! The *Lectures to the Working-Classes* which were published in four volumes in 1845, 1846 and 1849, appear to have been delivered with regularity till March 1846, when they were discontinued, Fox writing to Miss Flower that his "chest will certainly not stand it long while this sort of atmosphere lasts."

A little before this date he speaks of there being "a capital crowd again at the National Hall. There is always

now a sprinkling of great-coated folk up in the Gallery that look like incognito M.P., or literary men." In his Prefatory Address to vol. iv. Fox reviews his Lectures and states :

Had they been continued to a more recent period . . . I should have dwelt with satisfaction on the prospects which have arisen of a cordial reunion between the middle and working classes. The late proceedings at Manchester have laid a broad basis for that reunion by the combination of Fiscal Reform, the Revision of Taxation, principles of Economy and Peace, and the Reform of the Representation, as objects of the same movement. These are the people's objects—the legitimate claims of the many as opposed to the sinister interests of the few.

Among the most democratic in spirit of the seventy-six Lectures printed is that on " English Wars : Their Causes, Cost and Consequences " which the Peace orator of to-day might study with great advantage to himself and his hearers :

War is the aristocratical trade ; war is the aristocratical passion ; war is the aristocratical convenience for bringing forward the junior members of titled families, instead of providing for them out of the family property. They cannot all be put in offices of state ; they cannot all be lords of the treasury, or direct plunderers of the treasury by official names, without knowing how to discharge official functions. You cannot put them all into the Church—not that any ordinary degree of wildness is deemed an objection. Their high blood and breeding cannot be expected to submit to the restraints which decorum imposes in that quarter. And so, the army, with its promotions—war, with its chances of cutting the way up to a barony, an earldom or a dukedom, that is what they specially delight in. And thus there is a power biassing them towards plunging the nation into what may be ruin and death to hundreds of thousand and millions, but which to them is the prospect of obtaining laurels, of being proclaimed heroes in all the newspapers of Europe, of having large properties assigned

them in reward for their desolating the land of others, and at last of taking their places in the "hereditary wisdom" of the country, to make laws for keeping their countrymen in peace and quietness.

The gentlemen who are, to-day, busily trying to force Conscription on our people, under another name, might ponder the following passage in which Fox defines with equal justice and spirit the attitude of the great majority of Englishmen who, while by no means believers in Peace-at-any-price doctrines, rejoice in their freedom from the burdens imposed by Militarism on the rest of Europe. Fox was a believer in "national military training for self-defence":—

. . . this alarm has been raised about calling out and training our militia. That oppressive system, while affecting to treat all classes equally, is what equality too often comes to in this country; it falls with crushing weight upon the poor, while it gives the rich only the trouble of handing out a small sum for a substitute. And for what? To set the regular troops at liberty. At liberty for what? . . . I do not mean to say that being trained to the use of arms is a thing that should be regarded as in itself criminal, or an occasion for resistance, if it is done in a just and considerate spirit. I think that every individual in a nation should be trained to the use of arms, and should also be taught the moral lesson, "never to use them except to repel invasion from his country's shores." But that would be very inconvenient in a land where there are a great many game preserves. It would be felt to be more seriously inconvenient in a land where the few govern the many, and where the interests of the many are too often sacrificed, with all due forms and solemnities of law, to the grasping and avaricious desires of those who possess political powers, and use political power for the furtherance of their class interests.

The same freedom of spirit that made Fox so antagonistic to Militarism brought him into collision with the jealous privileges of Trade Unionism.

Many of you (working men) have been the sorest enemies of the rights of labour, and severer oppressors of your brethren than your hardest task-masters. Honest and skilful men, and in peril of starvation, have been hunted from shop to shop, from one establishment to another, because they had not served a regular apprenticeship, till they were fain to find a loathsome shelter in the poor-house, or lie down and perish by the wayside. . . . The jealousy with which some trades keep down their numbers, excluding all influx from other trades, limiting the numbers of the young employed lest they should grow up into competitors . . . is a violation alike of Free Trade and common humanity. . . . The freest circulation of labour is the common right and interest of that class.

In common with the Free Trade manufacturers, though without any suspicion of self-interest attaching, Fox did not believe that legislation could regulate the labour market by fixing either a maximum or a minimum wage. In his *Lecture on the Labour Market* he declares : " I see no way of improving the labour market for the working classes but by the principle of co-operation. . . . This is the lever by which the great mass of the community may eventually be raised. . . . Every man has a Capitalist and a Labourer in his person." He did not foresee the teachings of modern Fabianism when he says, " You can no more destroy the power of capital or the dependence of labour on capital than you can destroy the impeding force of friction, or square the circle."

But, on the other hand, he was a socialist at heart :

See what the people produce as the result of their ceaseless exertions ; everything ; your splendid houses, stately mansions, gorgeous robes and finest delicacies. Why you are but their pensioners, deriving from them whatever enhances the worth of your property, and then turning it to account in the conveniences and luxuries of life. . . . They are like the fertile soil from which the farmer obtains his harvests and the landlord derives his rents.

One of the most striking proofs of Fox's social enlightenment is perhaps afforded by his being a strong champion of woman's suffrage. He criticises "the weak point" in the People's Charter, which shelved the proposition "against which we have no just argument to adduce, but only to entertain our fears of entertaining it lest the false estimate man entertains for this half of the human family may cause his ignorance and prejudice to be enlisted to retard the progress of his own freedom." The Chartists used in fact the same argument of "inexpediency" that Liberal politicians are using to-day. Fox, after deploring "the want of any real respect for woman" in the House of Commons' Debates, points out that women, like the working classes may well feel that their interests are better entrusted to their own keeping. "Besides in many cases the interests of men and women are not the same . . . and the stronger party will be sure to merge the interests of the weaker in its own until the less powerful have at least a proportionate share of the representative government of the country." Fox's optimism on the subject of the good sense and right feeling of the working class was perhaps specially coloured on this occasion by his desire to flatter his audience. He speaks always as an orator as well as a reformer :

Hereafter when all the nonsense shall have passed away—when those who even now vote not only in parochial contests, but at the East India House upon matters affecting the government of many millions of human beings, will also exercise the same right in the election of members of the British Parliament . . . I believe that then there will be a grateful recollection of the fact, that at a period when this question was only mentioned by other bodies with scorn and contempt, the working classes of Great Britain treated it respectfully, heralded the way for its free and fair discussion, and its grave and righteous decision.

Similarly in his remarks on Education, the Death Penalty, Property in Land, the Living-In-System for Shop

Assistants, Home Rule, and Taxation, Fox in many respects is ahead of our own times, though on other subjects, such as the Irish Church, the reforms he advocated have long been carried. In *The Lectures to the Working Classes*, Fox however missed his opportunity of putting forward a clear programme of social reforms. His literary and moral tendencies were too strong for him. He shared the general illusion that the working-classes were to be raised by Halls, Institutes, Athenæums and Sunday Lectures. And in his unrelenting advocacy of "useful reading and mental instruction," he delivered most of his lectures on such subjects as, *Living Poets*; *Leigh Hunt* and *Mrs Worton*; *Bacon's Essays*; *The Chief End of Human Life*; *Nicolas Copernicus* and *Thomas Watt*; on *Suicide*; *The Temples* and *Theatres*, etc. This conviction of his generation that education was the great thing needful was of course generated by the state of ignorance general in the "lower classes." We must remember also that at that date (1846) the wealthy classes were extremely suspicious of popular education being used against their own interests, and that the clergy were making a prolonged campaign to keep the schools in their own hands. It was natural therefore that all the enlightened members of the middle-class should look on education as the supreme instrument for the raising of the masses, and over-rate its corrective influence on human nature. The same spectacle may be seen in Russia to-day. We cannot help asking ourselves whether the Early Victorians really believed one half of what they spoke and wrote on the subject. But every generation, in succession, has its programme of salvation, its special beacon lights of social and political propaganda. And in the broad sense the principles of education for which Fox struggled, are triumphant; it is the teachers themselves who know best what relation its practice bears to the crowd's environment and mental inheritance.

CHAPTER X

The Daily News—EXTRACTS FROM FOX'S LETTERS DEATH OF MISS ELIZA FLOWER

THE year 1846 was an eventful one for Fox, the first six months saw him hard at work on *The Daily News* and the successful finish of his *League* work ; and its close brought the death of Miss Eliza Flower, and his selection as Radical candidate for Oldham. For several years over-taxed with pressure of journalistic work, Fox's strength had scarcely proved equal to the calls made upon it by the constant strain of continual lecturing. His spirit rose to the occasion, but from the tone of his letters to private friends one concludes that he had a hard struggle to earn sufficient money to keep his household going. We may dismiss, here, in a few lines the subject of his family cares. His eldest boy, Florance, born deaf and dumb, had fortunately obtained a situation in the Government Registration Office in November 1841, and discharged his clerical duties satisfactorily till his superannuation twenty-five years later. His second son, Franklin, had about this time, 1841, taken to a sailor's life, sailing in American ships, but causing his father anxiety by turning up in London, ragged and penniless, when least expected, and showing no anxiety to go to sea again. His daughter "Tottie" (afterwards Mrs Bridell Fox), after her school-days were over, was training as an art student, occasionally visiting her aunts, Miss Sarah Fox and Miss Anne Fox, at Norwich. Miss Flower, whose health had shown ominous signs of

breaking down since 1842, frequently stayed with her sister, Sadie (Mrs Adams), at Adam Street, Adelphi, during Fox's short visits for rest, health and recreation to his friend Mr Peter Taylor, at Croydon. Forced to move from Queen Square, Westminster, in 1842, Fox took separate lodgings for himself, and for Miss Flower and his daughter till, at the end of the year, the family was reunited in their new house at Charlotte Street, Bedford Square. In a collection of occasional letters to Miss Flower, written whenever Fox was away from home, lecturing for the League, etc., we find repeated reference to the latter's illness, to the doctor's reports on her consumptive condition, to the changes of country air at Cromer and Cuckfield and Ventnor where she sought relief. At the close of 1845 we find the subject of her health coupled with a reference to the Brownings and Forster :

The Yarnolds are at *Florence*. If you remember I mentioned that eighteen months ago almost, when your going abroad for a time was first discussed. The climate is described as fine and healthy ; but the winters are colder than at Pisa. What say you to the latter, and arranging with the Brownings ? You might remunerate them by the good offices of mediation and reconciliation which may be required. I wonder whether she is still angry with anybody that does not understand *Sordello* ? She almost quarrelled with H. Martineau for her want of perception.

Forster never heard of the Browning marriage till the proof of the newspaper notice was sent ; when he went into one of his great passions at the supposed hoax, ordered up the compositor to have a swear at him, and demanded to see the MS. from which it was taken ; so it was brought, and he instantly recognised the hand of Browning's sister. Next day come a letter from R. B. saying he had often meant to tell him or write of it, but hesitated between the two, and neglected both. She was better, and a winter in Italy had been recommended some months ago.

Forster had sought Fox's advice as to a quarrel between Browning and himself in October 1840, and from a series

of letters still in existence we find that his relations with Fox were broken now and then by misunderstandings due no doubt to his own hasty temper. The tone of Fox's letters to Forster is, however, warm and conciliatory, not showing the irritation his journalistic disagreements with the latter often caused him. Thus in April 1844 Fox writes to Forster :

I have never had—nor could have—any annoyance associated with you except that untoward circumstances have diminished our intercourse—sometimes perhaps suggesting the apprehension that you had mentally “left me off a little.”

The coolness, whatever may have caused it, was evidently felt by Forster as in a note dated 24th July 1844, the latter writes :

Are we never to meet again ? No such decree has gone forth I hope. I heard you lecture on Sunday night. You did not see me—I suppose ? You looked fatigued when it was over, and I did not like to go to you. . . . Half an hour ago I heard that you had a difference with the League. Is this so ? Can they be such fools ?

In November 1845 the two men are on their old terms of intimacy, as Fox writes begging Forster to insert a brief notice of the repetition of Miss Flower's Concert of Sacred Music, adding “Miss Flower is ordered to Hastings for the winter.” Fox's appointment in January 1846 as leader-writer on the staff of the new journal, *The Daily News* was due to Forster's influence with Dickens, and we shall here insert an unfinished MS. account by Mrs Bridell Fox of her father's connection with that paper :

On January 21, 1846, *The Daily News* was started with a great blowing of trumpets and clashing of cymbals, with the magic name of the most popular writer of the day as Editor.

Charles Dickens was then at the very height of his brilliant career ; sought by everybody, known by everybody, and loved by everybody. A more attractive and engrossing personality could not exist, and the mere glamour of his name flung itself over the whole paper like a mantle.

The paper promised to be as Radical as even Mr Fox could desire, Dickens' enlightened and enthusiastic views as to elevating the character of the press, as to the crying need of popular education, and for generally raising the status of the poor ; and for reform of various social anomalies, were completely in sympathy with those long advocated by Mr Fox.

Charles Dickens assumed the Editorship, much against the urgent advice of his intimate friend and trusty adviser, John Forster, who knew better than Dickens himself realised how utterly unfit his genius and temperament were for the "plodding duties" of the Editor of a Daily Newspaper.

It was not many days before the Pegasus broke down under the strain. Forster records the date of the first issue with a memorandum from Dickens to himself dated six o'clock of the morning of the 21st January 1846, to tell him exultingly that they had been at press "three quarters of an hour, and were out before *The Times*": while not twenty days later another note written in the night of Monday the 9th February, announces that ("tired to death and quite worn out") he had "just resigned his official functions." Forster adds¹ "I had not been unprepared." "To the supreme control which he had quitted, I succeeded."²

Indeed, Dickens had relied on Forster's willing and efficient aid from the very first ; how much has hardly been recognised. It was not many days before Forster had to throw himself into the breach made by the collapse of his friend's physical powers to sustain the work which his enthusiasm has prompted him to undertake too readily.

Forster brought to his assistance, into the paper from its very commencement a large staff of first-rate literary talent ; foremost amongst whom was W. J. Fox, who shared with himself the chief burden of the political leading articles. The

¹ But Dickens only edited seventeen numbers of *The Daily News*, Fox Bourne, vol. ii. p. 145.

² Pages 192-3-4, chap. ix. vol. ii. *Life of Charles Dickens* by John Forster.

first leading article in the first number was by W. J. Fox following immediately, and not divided from it, by a half page which seems to have been Dickens' address to the public.¹ A note from Dickens to Mr Fox apologises for altering one word in the article that follows, the "one word" referring apparently to the omission of the name of Bright after that of Cobden.

The note runs thus :

OFFICES OF *The Daily News*, WHITEFRIARS.
Twenty-First January 1846.

MY DEAR FOX,—The boy is in waiting. I need not tell you how our printer failed us, last night. I hope for better things to-night, and am bent on a fight for it. If we can get a good paper to-morrow I believe we are as safe as such a thing can be.

Your leader most excellent. I made bold to take out Bright's name for reasons I hinted at the other day, and which I think have validity in them. He is unscrupulous and indiscreet, Cobden never so.

It didn't offend you? Ever faithfully.

CHARLES DICKENS.

W. J. Fox, Esq.

Mr Fox can hardly have agreed with Dickens in his harsh opinion of Bright, for in a letter to John Bright in the League newspaper signed *A Norwich Weaver Boy* (February 28th, 1846) Mr Fox writes :

Not merely in the technical language of religious classification, but in the broadest and best sense of the word, Society knows you for a Friend.

OFFICES OF *The Daily News*, WHITEFRIARS.
Friday Morning. 1 o'clock.

MY DEAR FOX,—So well as I can make out (and you know how difficult it is to make anything out, at a newspaper office) Peel is decidedly playing false, and will creep into small holes, and compensate, and be quite true to himself, which I need not say is being false to everybody else. I have therefore written in, at the point you

¹ See *Jubilee No. of Daily News*.

mention, what one is pretty safe in writing about such a customer ; at the same time reserving (like the good Vicar of Wakefield) a means of coming out creditably in any case. Ever yours,

C. D.

The uncertainty as to whether Sir Robert Peel, then Prime Minister, would end, or prolong the struggle, which was agitating the country, kept people at fever heat : for indeed Peel had been too closely associated with the Conservative party for the Radicals, at that date, to feel any confidence in an honest conviction on his part to Free Trade principles. They mistrusted him accordingly.

Mr Fox had by this time a considerable experience of the Editorial work of a daily paper from his many years conjunction with Black in the *Morning Chronicle*, added to his earlier work in the *True Sun*, and felt sadly that the first appearance of the new paper was by no means up to the mark for ensuring success, —hence the following words of practical criticism to John Forster on the second day of publication :—

MY DEAR FORSTER,—A very striking improvement—three such improvements will do—

Paper better—none too good yet.

Reading not so atrocious—still bad.

Arrangement dawning—but no Providence over paragraphs.

Advertisements half sorted, half helter-skelter, in three places—etc. Does nobody *die, marry, or be born* in the *Daily News* ? (*The Times*, only, reinforces those lists from the local papers.)

Reporting—still bad—that of the Norwich meeting yesterday very unsatisfactory—this morning, *the one interesting thing* in the Duncombe meeting diluted and obscured. You will see in any other paper that Fergus O'Connor distinctly affirmed the reception of a special message from the Duke of Richmond making overtures to him for co-operation with the Protectionists.

Yesterday's meeting at Willis' Rooms should have been reported. The correction of Dawson the best imaginable.

The Country Party I trust you will follow up—at once philosophical and telling.—Yours ever,

W. J. Fox.

Jan. 22nd, 1846.

At the end of the first three months according to Mr Fox Bourne, the *Daily News* very nearly came to grief. It did not pay its way, and there were discussions and differences at headquarters on many of the important questions of the day.

Mr Charles Wentworth Dilke was appointed Manager, he having had previous experience in retrieving the fortunes of *The Athenæum* which had failed in 1828 in the hands of James Silk Buckingham. With the new management the ultra Radical tone of the paper was modified, and Mr Fox no longer felt free to write on many subjects. Mr Forster's milder tone in politics allowed him to acquiesce for a time with the changed régime. Not however for very long.

So far Mrs Bridell-Fox. Her father's own account of his relations with Forster and of his work on the *Daily News* is subjoined, extracted from a series of undated notes to Miss Eliza Flower, written from January to the autumn of 1846:—

1. The getting up, and general appearance and arrangement of the paper [*The Daily News*] this morning is quite a triumph of Forster's power, and reconciles me to the efforts I made last week to start him fairly. I was paid for them and moreover I paid for them too; for Saturday evening brought another of these attacks. I almost fell down dead-asleep, with a letter in my hand of which I had only read the first sentence, and which I did not finish till yesterday morning, for finding all resistance vain, I went to bed after two hours of it. Yesterday morning I was pale, and languid, but rallied for the evening and got through much as usual. To-day nothing but exhaustion; and that not uncomfortable.

2. Forster's position does not show him off well. It brings out his worst points. Dickens and I are regularly together against him on almost everything involving a difference of opinion. And he takes a beating the most ungraciously.

3. Forster does not stand the work half so well as I do. He stops to trim his sentences, and sits costive in his composition. Such sharp practice has been out of his way, and suits his taste as little as his habits. He wants to come here some night, just for the great comfort of having an hour's talk of something besides the newspaper.

4. Yes, it was very stupid both of Dickens and Jerrold not to be at Exeter Hall ; but these literary people have no Public work in them after all. Dickens broke down in the mechanical business of the *Daily News* : to my great vexation, as he has really a better morale for Editorship than Forster ; and [Douglas] Jerrold proved so utterly inefficient in his attempts at leaders that his engagement had to be terminated. We have now a stupid man of figures and statistics still on the paper, who is worse than nobody : all of which produces this inconvenience that there is no relief, as there might be with a strong corps ; and while at Oldham, I had actually to pay Walford, as a substitute, to furnish my quota of articles. This makes a journey double expensive. But there's no help.

5. Douglas Jerrold was very pleasant yesterday, simple, true, funny, and earnest. Eliza Cook seemed out of sorts, and as if not first fiddle enough for her taste. Thom (Scotch poet) was in a discontented maundering sort of state, and I fear getting into a mess ; for he has lost his business in Scotland and got no business in London. Of all things, he volunteered to sing Burns' " Bonnie wee thing " to *Jerrold* and *Forster* !

6. *Punch* comes regularly I hope. Do not overlook the lines signed *Alcibiades*. They are Tennyson's. The occasion is this : a striking poem of no great merit, has appeared, called the new *Timon*, believed to be by Bulwer, though he disowns it. In this there are some very disparaging lines on Tennyson, and unpleasant things about his person. So it roused him out of his nervousness ; and here's vigour enough to a certainty.

7. Very pleasant dinner last night. (Forster, Tennyson, and Fox.) Mr Dyce the man who edits old plays made the fourth. And we talked away uninterruptedly ; heroically and literally, spiritually and queerly ; all the time till Forster was obliged to go to Office, which he did not do till half past ten, when being Sunday night, he might have been coming away. Tennyson has a fine head, and haggard face ; smokes incessantly. It was a regular quartett of talk, for there was nobody mono-

polising, nor anybody avoiding it. No particularly striking things were said, but everything was good. And we rambled on, like a pleasure party, over acting and criticism, and Shakespeare, and china, and sundry sorts of things. Forster had hinted to me to say nothing of *Timon*, but Dyce who knew nothing of the affair tumbled headlong into it. Tennyson still believes it to be Bulwer ; and the passage is a versification of a review that Bulwer wrote of him some years ago in the *New Monthly*, when he was editor.

8. I have been so annoyed with Forster's timidity, and narrowness, and carefulness this week, that I am seriously thinking of cutting my connection with the *Daily News*, and shall think how to replace a portion of the income. I cannot get the whole any other way, or near it ; and it will be awkward that stopping and the League, just together. But I shall try hard to find something.

I am certainly not fit to write in any paper which I do not command. He is still less fit to be at the head of anything political and popular.

However I shall be sorry to quarrel with him, and will not if I can help it, I begin to write myself out much more in my *Publicolas* (*Weekly Dispatch*). They are growing so good that I have made Luschen cut them out.

9. I do not know what turn the newspaper [the *Daily News*] matter will take, but I am to have a meeting with the proprietors some day next week, and talk over the differences.

Poor Forster is looking very ill under all his harassments. Besides my remonstrating one way, and his wanting to please the proprietors another way, there is the immense departure from all his ordinary tastes and habits, and a corps reduced much below the number required for the paper to work easily.

10. My schism with Forster will come to a head, I expect, in a few days ; and for all but the money, I should prefer its resulting in a speedy separation from the paper. Landor came in with him yesterday, so that we could not talk much about it, but no good can be made of that paper—that's certain.

11. We are all in a bustle with the *Daily News*. The proprietors are playing a very shabby trick upon the public ; Forster has cut the connection, and I am writing to the new Editor to require that my engagement be cancelled. I expect they will consent ; and if so, I shall be very glad to wash my

hands of the dirty concern : though I must immediately look about me pretty sharp for the needful.

12. In resigning his Editorship Forster walked up and down crooning : " To-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new." I do not think he is quite sure of his new ones yet ; and mine may be in the moon, for what I know. However we have washed our hands of that fraud upon the public, the *Daily News*.

According to Fox's account-book the last of *The Daily News* payments to him was made on 31st October 1846, the same month in which Forster resigned.

In the series of this same twelvemonths' letters to Miss Flower Fox recurs repeatedly to two unsettled matters which were dragging on through 1846—his provisional invitation to stand as a Liberal Candidate for Oldham, and his efforts to secure a coadjutor to take half his work at Finsbury Chapel off his hands. While he complains of the difficulty of finding a clever young minister who could step into his shoes, he alludes now and then to his growing disabilities. As the writer's independence of character is preserved in these confidential utterances we think it best to let the following passages speak for themselves :—

13. (*Dec.* 1845.) I have sent Levey [printer] a circular to the Congregation, to put in type, telling them that I do not feel my strength equal to my two Sunday appointments, and asking them to release me of half the duty by appointing a coadjutor, for whom I offer to relinquish half the income. This seems the only way, now the question of removal is settled, of bringing my work more within the compass of the power of either mind or body. And as they intend Finsbury to be permanent ; it will be better for that perhaps than waiting till my lecturing stops entirely and the people break up.

14. I really think this Dawson of Birmingham may be got to London. A nice letter from him. The Trustees turn him out for preaching doctrines " pernicious to society " ; and he says he supposes I know what that means. I shall commission the Trustees to tell the Congregation to-morrow that I will join any twenty or forty members in subscribing £400 a year, for

two years, to invite him. 'Twill test their earnestness about keeping the Chapel on permanently, and be a good incidental admonition to them. Moreover, that would ensure keeping up the services all the year round. But I suspect they will be rather aghast at the proposition.

15. It seems to me very like a poetical fiction, those shady groves, and quiet leafy nooks, and purling rivulets, and all the rest. Bricks and omnibuses are the great realities of life. The world is really only a huge town. There's a sky, to be sure ; and somewhere there's a sea ; almost as far off. But here they fade into insubstantiality, nothingness. The heavens do not declare the glory of the Lord ; they only tell how long it will be before the boy will come for the day's article. I wish they would make workhouses a little more agreeable. Confound those Poor Law Commissioners !

16. I do not know how the Finsbury folk will get on ; from all I hear, they seem to have only two ideas in their heads, those of paying their seat-rents, and having me, and find their brains exceedingly dislocated and obfuscated by any other consideration. However they have appointed a special Committee, and I suppose I shall hear more soon.

17. These accounts of yourself are exceedingly unsatisfactory. It is utterly impossible that I should run down and see, with my four nights a week in the *Daily News*, two lectures and the League article ; but somebody might.

18. I am writing large as if your eyes were as weak as mine. I felt very old at the Exhibition ; for I needed one glass to see the pictures well, and another to read the catalogue. This is one of Death's three warnings, is it not ? in the old story that is done into verse for moral effect in the Selection Books. It is really very inconvenient ; but there's no help. I shall get to poor Miss Johnston's father's condition soon.

He sees everything as in a fog. That will be a terrible abomination to me. However, it is a good type of one's scepticism. For one has but a streak or two of faith-light over a great wilderness of fog-land ; and that flickers about a good deal sometimes. Well ; we shall see what we shall see ; and besides, shall not see what we shall not see. Not a very comfortable moral to finish with.

19. The Oldham business has taken another turn ; young Cobbett's party will not abide by the decision of the majority

of the committees, which was all in my favour, but he had a separate Meeting and began a canvass. So I must either go down to a public Meeting of the Electors, in the beginning of next week, or cut the connection altogether; which last is what I think of doing, for the botheration of a long contest is not at all tempting, even if successful. Nor ought I to run any chance of defeat.

20. (May 1846.) I have heard from Oldham this morning; the requisition signatures have increased so as to indicate very fair chance, but by no means an actual certainty. They are to go on signing another week, and then close. I shall then get some of the business people of the League at Manchester to analyse the state of the Electoral body, and be guided by the result as to whether I go to the contest when the time comes. The General Election will most likely be in the autumn.

21. I met old Hardy in the street yesterday, who began full gallop to tell me that he had just ordered his bookseller not to send him any more of the *Prospective Review*, for James Martineau had written an article in it in which he admitted that Christ might be mistaken about something. If Christ might, clearly old Hardy could not.

It was very funny to hear all that stuff talked again, which seems to belong to the world before the Flood. McColl had once a letter of introduction to Aspland, who refused to see him because he had published a sermon speaking disparagingly of the moral character of David. Well!!!

22. I have the prospect of some rest now; Sundayrest, at least, for *The Dispatch* will come on to keep the week crowded. But on Sunday Mr Barton, whom you have perhaps heard Peter Taylor talk of, a young clergyman who has had doubts on his faith, and as been lecturing about, will supply at Finsbury. I have arranged to keep the direction of the services.

23. Mr Barton will have a beautiful specimen of the music to begin with to-morrow. It will be curious to watch how it goes of itself as it were; looking on as if from another world. I have a sort of posthumous feeling about it.

24. People begin to cry out about Mr Barton's Anti-Christianity; he has been rather free the last Sunday or two and Maggie [Miss Thornton of the Quire] told Charles [Fox] she was frightened at his Atheism; feels her poor little soul in danger. In fact he said there was no such thing as a soul, and

she felt quite sure to the contrary. I told Peter Taylor to give him a hint for to-morrow when he lectures on the resurrection ; the Quire will be in danger of singing " Dark, dark in Lightness" (Instead of " Light, light, in darkness " No. 116) if it turns out as I expect.

From the undertone of these letters to Miss Flower one gathers that the more deeply anxious Fox grew, as to her state of health, the harder he strove to explain away the ominous signs of her malady. There are weekly injunctions to her to obey the doctor's orders, and a pathetic eagerness to convince her that he himself too has frequently suffered from spitting of blood, faintness, etc.

Probably he must have guessed the worst in August 1846, when he writes to his daughter that Miss Flower's "amazing restlessness, growing weakness, and desire to be alone keep increasing." The end was not long delayed ; Eliza Flower succumbed at Hurstpier-point on the 12th December, to the consumption that her portrait shows us was at the root of her frail and intensely spiritual nature. From an obituary notice by G. J. Holyoake we learn that Fox conducted the funeral service held at South Place Chapel a week later, with touching restraint of feeling. The testimony of Fox's friends on Eliza Flower's death is well voiced by Forster in his letter of condolence, where he says, " There is one suffrage less, of the few the world contains, that one might hope to exert oneself for."

CHAPTER XI

THE OLDHAM ELECTIONS—"THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS" FOX'S "NATIONAL EDUCATION" BILL

FOX'S candidature for Oldham, according to one of his letters, appears to have come about through the fame of his lectures at the National Hall. Through the attempt of the sitting member, Mr John Fielden, to force his son-in-law Mr J. M. Cobbett, on the constituency, a large body of his Radical supporters seceded, and brought Fox forward as a staunch reformer in July 1847. It is difficult at this date to say how much Mr Fielden's untiring championship of the Ten Hours' Bill for limiting the work of women and children (1840) had met the views of the "millocrats." The Conservatives, on their side, nominated Mr John Duncuft, and the struggle was entered upon by the rival parties with a bitterness that has made the elections 1847-1852 famous in the annals of the borough. We are indebted to a little volume *Memory Sketches* by Benjamin Grime, reprinted from the *Oldham Weekly Chronicle*, for a detailed account of these stormy days.

In his first election address Fox declared for the Disestablishment of the Church, for revision of taxation the burden of which "should be removed from the shoulders of industry to those of property," for Universal Education, for the reform of the Poor Law and of the Irish Land Laws. The coalition of the manufacturers and shopkeepers, of Conservatives and Dissenters against Mr Fielden, was bitterly resented by the Oldham operatives

and the Old Cobbettites, since, in Mr Grime's words, "The struggle was one in which the few by means of class privilege were able to defeat the wishes of the multitude" (of non-voters). The Fielden leaders seeing that the day was going against them appealed to popular passion, but Fox was returned at the head of the poll with 723 votes, followed by the Conservative with 692. The working classes "being beaten for the first time," says Mr Grime, became "morose, sulky and vindictive."

In a letter to his sister forty-five years later, Franklin Fox records his memories of the 1840 election :

I was with our father at Oldham, on that occasion, but did not see the burning in effigy which took place at night after the election was over and the poll had been declared, but of course I knew of it and was told that a stuffed image was made to resemble Mr W. J. Fox and that it was carried by a yelling and excited mob to a field at a little distance from the town where a bonfire was made and the effigy burnt.

The Town was in a state of great uproar after the election. Angry mobs paraded the streets. Windows were smashed in every direction. The shutters were put up at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon at the *King's Arms* Inn or Hotel in the market place at Oldham where papa and I stayed, in consequence of brickbats and stones being hurled continuously at the house after the poll had been declared. Papa and I dined together by ourselves, lights having to be lit owing to the darkened room. I went out after dinner contrary to Papa's desire, for the crowd was unpleasantly savage, and saw a troop of dragoons¹ (I think), but some regiment of cavalry certainly drawn up before our quarters. I made my way to the Committee rooms of Mr Duncuft, and found the newly elected M. P. (Papa's Tory colleague) under a bed in the attic where he had betaken himself for safety. Nothing very dreadful happened, however, though the mob tried to irritate the soldiers, and yelled: "Peterloo! Peterloo! They want to massacre us as at Peterloo over again." We left next morning for town.

It is ironical that Fox, who claimed, "I belong to the

¹ Mr Grime speaks of "armed infantry."

people. My strongest sympathies ever have been, and will be, with the industrial classes," should have gone in fear of his life, in the two subsequent elections, at the hands of the Oldham operatives, but Mr Grime explains that he had to suffer for having been returned for the borough in company with a Tory colleague. It is true that Fox and Mr Duncuft voted in opposite lobbies in Parliament on the following questions :—The Disabilities of the Jews, the Repeal of the Window Tax, the Pardoning of the Newport Chartists, the Suppression of Public Meetings, the Extension of the Franchise, the Introduction of the Ballot, etc. But soon the obfuscation of the popular intelligence through the bias of faction became such that in spite of Fox's unflinching Radicalism on all these questions (1847-1852) the non-electors (*i.e.*, the operatives) carried by a large majority at public meetings votes of "no confidence" in Mr W. J. Fox.

The old Radical party threw over their creed and traditions and went Conservative, while the mill-owning class and the tradesmen formed the new Liberal party. Fox, in his turn, had to run the gauntlet of a hostile coalition, and at the General Election of 1852 was thrown out, Mr J. M. Cobbett replacing him. But before three weeks had passed, Mr Duncuft the Conservative member died, and Fox again consented to contest the seat. It is proof of the violence of the Oldham mob at the General Election of 1852, that Fox "refused to expose himself to the brutal usage of the Tory roughs, and submitted to the candidature only on the condition that he should remain absent during the whole proceedings of this (third) election."

The account given by Mr Grime, himself an eye-witness of the intimidation and brutality practised by the "Bendigo lambs," or gangs of roughs, for four or five months, makes an exceedingly curious picture, one that recalls Hogarthian England. Mr Grime says :—

In treating of the brutality that was practised by "Bendigo's lambs"—or rather the Tory roughs—during this long and exciting struggle we cannot possibly exaggerate. It assumed every form that was aggravating and offensive. Those roughs paraded the streets in gangs, molested every known partizan of the advanced party, attacked their homes, and broke into their houses, and threw destructive missiles through their windows. Committees of the Foxite party could not hold their deliberations in public houses or elsewhere without constant dread of their brutal assailants. . . . The Foxites scarcely ever ventured to collect their forces in the open air. When they did they were brutally attacked by the Healdite rough, and were most roughly handled when not able to repel brute force by brute force.

The scene at the hustings, on the polling day, was a worthy close to the "intimidation, coercion, screwing, bottling" tactics of Fox's opponents, though not without touches of Old English humour. Thus we read in a contemporary report:

The fighting on the right recommenced more furiously than before, upon which the Mayor said, "Gentlemen, keep quiet and permit others the same liberty you yourselves enjoy." The outrageous scene below was still going on, men by hundreds beating each other with sticks and umbrellas and exchanging furious kicks while the special constables seemed scarcely able to make their way through the dense crowd to the place where the conflict raged most fiercely. . . .

In spite of this campaign of violence and obstruction, aided by the wealth of Conservative Oldham, Fox was returned on 3rd December 1852 with 102 majority over the Tory, Mr Heald. The usual charges of Infidelity and Atheism were of course brought against "Fox the reformer" and it is not surprising to learn that his *Religious Ideas*, a book which we shall refer to presently, was held to be so damaging to his candidature that a Public Notice was circulated saying that "the book could be seen and

examined every day (Sunday excepted) from ten to twelve o'clock in the morning, and from two to four o'clock in the afternoon, at the *Hare and Hounds*, Yorkshire Street, Oldham." The picture of an Oldham Boniface expounding the *Religious Ideas* to the "Bendigo lambs" is worthy of Gillray's pencil.

As we have summarised above the character of the three elections in 1847-1852, we may conveniently here make a few excerpts from Fox's correspondence of the period. In December 1847 he writes to his daughter on his speech in Parliament on the Jews' Disability Bill:

The Oath is as old as the time of James I. and was not intended to refer to Creeds. It was levelled at the Jesuit doctrine of swearing with *mental reservations*, and he adds characteristically, "On Sunday I shall begin a Course of Lectures on the *Book of Job*, which will last the six weeks till Parliament meets again. If I want illustrations the House will furnish it, listening to the everlasting Irish members."

In October 1851 he alludes to attacks upon him in *The Times*, and the *Dundee Courier*, which last paper charged against him that "to distinguish himself from the vulgar herd who wear plain clothes, he habitually arrays himself in the Quaker garb, the collarless coat of Oxford grey, the white cravat and the broad-brimmed beaver," all "to show how bloody-minded I was about the King of Naples."

On 1st July 1852, a week before the second Oldham election, he describes "a tremendous meeting of 10,000 or 12,000, at the least, kept all in confusion by organised bands for that purpose, and plenty of fighting. Speaking was made quite impossible—so it was given up, and we have determined to attempt no more meetings, but issue addresses, etc., through the Press. . . . The rascality of the Fielden faction in the desperate attempt to recover the

command of the Borough is so unutterably disgusting that it will be an immense relief to have done with it, whether by winning or losing. I can only lose by the grossest intimidation." And in the following week he writes to his daughter :

We were beaten by brute force, our voters in the out-lying districts being kept from the poll by organised mobs. . . . My swollen hand is subsiding after the several hundred parting shakings on Friday—when many actually cried at losing me. There has been much very disgusting, and much very beautiful, but of all this hereafter. . . . I should like to have beaten them but have no deep sorrow about it and am altogether in better health and spirits than usual.

In November of the same year we find Henry Vincent, the Chartist, writing to Fox about " the success of my meetings at Oldham. . . . Awfully crowded, very enthusiastic and altogether in your favour. I would strongly urge you to visit Oldham and deliver one or two addresses. Your election is certain if you do. All that the Borough wants is to be grappled by a strong hand. The demagogues were always cowards when boldly opposed." And a fortnight later Vincent is congratulating Fox on " his splendid victory."

They have triumphed over the most atrocious ruffianism and your victory is really the triumph of principle won by honest brave men. I trust that your health will soon be better.

In November 1847 one of Fox's constant admirers, Mr S. Courtauld of Braintree, had come forward with a most handsome proposal to settle £400 annuity on Fox for the rest of his life. This gift, which was gratefully accepted, enabled Fox to devote himself to his Parliamentary duties and freed him from the constant harassment of journalistic work. Mr Courtauld's letter to Fox

is so delicately written that we may quote it here as a model for benefactors at large :—

MY DEAR SIR,—I am preparing a deed for securing to you a Life Annuity of £400 a year. I have for years greatly desired to do something of this kind, but tangled associations of conventional feeling in respect of monetary arrangements between friends have plagued and prevented me : but if there is a time for all things, and amongst the rest a time for foolishness—is there not also a time for leaving it off. Last night I wrote a rather longish letter to you,—and lit my cigar with it, believing that I might rely on your sympathy with me to give you assurance that I take this step in the spirit that would best commend itself to your acquiescence. If I though my personal intercourse and relations with you would be embarrassed—vitiating in any degree—made false through this arrangement, I should feel that I made by it a very painful sacrifice—but I have faith that this need not and will not be and I make this communication at once in case it may have any bearing on pending engagements.

Yours very truly,

SAM COURTAULD.

P. S.—I know that you cherish the associations of Finsbury Chapel, and that you must have high and true satisfaction in your mission there, but other spheres of action may open before you, and also you may have need to rest from action ; and the special purpose of the arrangement I venture to make is that you should, *so far as it goes*, be independent of Finsbury or of any other particular engagement and be, to the extent of this independent fund, free to *do*, or not to do—as your desire may be.

Mr Moncure D. Conway tell us in his *Centenary History of the South Place Society* that Fox “made an effort to resign” his pastorate in 1847, “and that in 1849 the Reverend Newenham Travers was engaged as assistant minister, Fox taking half the Sundays, while in 1851, with Mr Jerson as assistant, Fox delivered only eight discourses, and in 1852 a final six. After Fox’s retirement the South Place Congregation dwindled away till in June 1863 the Society was near closing its doors, Mr Moncure D. Conway

coming to the rescue in that year, and by his zeal and eloquence restoring it to its old standing. The culmination of Fox's ministerial career Mr Moncure D. Conway rightly finds in *The Religious Ideas*, a series of addresses delivered in 1849, "discourses which anticipated half the *Hibbert Lectures* of our own time. In them his ministry flowered and virtually ended. They placed South Place Chapel beyond the reach of any reactionary influence."

In *The Religious Ideas* Fox very neatly underpins the venerated fabric of supernatural religion and places it on a rationalistic foundation. In developing his main thesis "Religion belongs to Nature; it belongs to humanity." Fox of course was only carrying to its logical conclusion progressive Unitarianism, with its teaching of "unrestricted freedom of religious thought," but he was before his time in constructing a sort of clearing-house in which the teaching of Victorian scientists and of the Comptists and Agnostics might be reconciled with those of Deists, and of those who "surrounded by an atmosphere of intelligence find their own minds enabled thereby to look yet higher, even to the great Source of Light." In publishing the banns between Science and the Religion of Humanity Fox was possibly under some obligations to Comte whose system was translated a few years later by Harriet Martineau (1853) and critically examined by Mill (1856) but it is only just to recognise that Fox had been working out and putting into practice all his life the principles upon which the French thinker has reared his imposing but hollow temple. Fox's foible as a preacher—his fondness for idealising man's moral nature, leads him to indulge at times in *The Religious Ideas* in a good deal of lofty platitude, but a system that finds revelation everywhere, "everywhere that man, cherishing his purest thoughts and highest faculties, finds his spirit in communion with the great Universal Spirit," must base itself upon religious, generalities. Instead of spending a life-time, like most of

all his orthodox brethren, in retreating point by point before the Higher Criticism, Fox advanced boldly to meet the doctrine of Evolution and clasp its professors to his bosom :

Come then, all sciences, with your discoveries, however remote, however stupendous, however contrasted with past philosophies and systems ; come then all sciences, and bring your tribute of homage to that religion which is the soul of all, and join with the loveliness and poetry of the world, making the same offering, and uniting in the same worship. Man, perplexed and bewildered by positive systems—enslaved, entangled and rendered wretched by dogmas—in this pure light of science of love, feels the breaking upon him of a brighter day.

Our confidence in “ the constitution of human nature which is the origin and test of moral truth ” is perhaps less brilliantly *couleur de rose* than that of the preacher of the *Religion of Humanity*, which, we are told, ‘ as man advances must advance also.’ ” It is difficult to be so enthusiastic over the interminableness of the road.

In celebrating Religion as “ the universal song of humanity,” Fox was under the necessity of accepting all creeds while endeavouring to reconcile them adroitly, “ a universality of spirit akin not only to the ages, to human nature, to the earth, but to the heavens themselves.”

“ . . . We see enough to account for and make us charitable towards even many of the worst superstitions that have existed in this world of ours.” The peroration indeed of his Fifth Lecture on *Divine Attributes* has much in common with the large generous optimism of Walt Whitman’s moral outlook in *Leaves of Grass*, the first draft of which was written only a few years after the Lectures on Religious Ideas were delivered.

Let those Egyptian Priests be there, bearing the books of Hermes, and the ark of Osiris.

Let Moses stretch forth his rod, smite the rock, and produce
living water for his people. . . .

Let the Persian climb the hill-top, to catch the first beams of
the rising sun, and prostrate himself in worship to that
symbol of eternal Light.

Let the Druid rear with gigantic stones his mystic circle.

Let Catholic Christianity marshal its processions, elevate
its Host, and rear its stupendous cathedrals.

We have ventured to print Fox's prose in the form of Whitman's fluid verse, to show that the main thought underlying the Norwich Weaver-Boy's *Religious Ideas* was "religions are doing the work of humanity the work of divinity," while his criticism of the isolating effects of dogmatic theology is no less pronounced than the cry of the great American poet against "the bat-eyed and materialistic priests."

In his lecture on *The Moral Idea and Heaven*, Fox completes his self-liberation from the dogmatic shackles of the Christian sects. He reaches indeed the identical conclusions that Tolstoy was to arrive at thirty years later!

Ethics had been filled with Church-made crimes and Church-made virtues. . . . In those theological bodies . . . making praises, prayers and sacrifices, kneelings and gesticulations are more important than doing justice, and loving mercy, and walking humbly before God. Another Church-made virtue has been that of submission—"prostration of the understanding" enforced first towards its priest, then to the written word or to its exposition in a creed. . . .

We seem to hear in these words the accents of the great Russian author. It is however only in their humanitarian ideals that the Englishman and the Russian are at one, for Fox is as anxious to show that the struggles of the harassed world flower and fruit in social morality as Tolstoy is anxious to withdraw from the individual the exercise of worldly power and to preach to him, "the Kingdom of God is within you."



WILLIAM JOHNSON FOX, M.P.

From the original portrait by Willdman owned by the South Place Society

In his Seventh Lecture on Redemption Fox carries the war into the theological camp, which "supposes an incarnate deity, for the purpose of bearing this load of sin and misery and expiating it by his own death on the cross, enduring not only the desertion of man, but, we are told, the desertion of the Deity also, in that awful moment." He attacks the metaphysical doctrine of the transfer of sin and righteousness, and of "divine vindictiveness" as "a strange and foul conception for man to entertain," and substitutes the latter-day conception of a simple humanitarian ideal—"no great work of emancipation, of deliverance, of redemption is ever wrought by humanity, unless the benevolent heart that undertakes the task has the strength of self-sacrifice, and is content to lay its account with long-continued endurance, and with bitter agony."

He then stips off "the aggrandisements which theology has heaped on Jesus, and declares that none of his supernatural attributes can compare in moral grandeur with his "utmost self-sacrifice and devotion in the very agonies of death." Considering the portentous alarms and excursions of a later day over Seeley's *Ecce Homo*, and the amount of head-shaking over so mild a rejection of supernatural Christianity as *Robert Elsmere* contains, it seems, at first sight, surprising that *The Religious Ideas* did not arouse general commotion. But the fact is it is only the bombs that burst inside the theological camp that send the inmates flying out angrily, into the open, to reply to the enemy. South Place Chapel was as privileged a spot in 1849 for the propagation of unorthodox Christianity as Essex Hall is to-day for the propaganda of socialistic teaching. The audience that Fox addressed in 1849, in point of view of earnest moral aspiration, was probably superior to any that our own best preachers address to-day, but it was small, and its intellectual sincerity kept it an elect body without power to propagate itself. As Fox put it delicately, "Christian Unitarianism has never found

itself so much in sympathy with mankind, notwithstanding its boast and its justified boast to some extent, of superior rationality, as to diffuse itself very widely in society."

In a brief memoir prefixed to a cheap edition of *The Religious Ideas*, Mr Courtney Kenny has ably put in a few lines the reasons why Fox's success in Parliament was necessarily limited :

He had for several years suffered from heart disease, and preserved his life only by systematic abstinence from everything that might excite him. This prevented him from taking a prominent part in Parliament even had he not entered it too late. Wilberforce said men seldom succeed in the House who enter it past thirty : and as Mr Fox entered it when past sixty it was not strange that he should prove too old for success. Yet he did good work there. He was one of the first to demand compulsory education. In 1850 he brought in "A Bill to promote the Secular Education of the People"—the first important effort ever made in Parliament for a really national system.

Before introducing his Education Bill Fox had made his mark in the House of Commons by his speeches in 1848 on Irish Reform, on the Sanitary Bill, and the Extension of the Franchise in 1849, speeches which at this distance of time need not detain us. Fox had "made the subject of education largely his own" we are told, and in Froude's *Short Studies on Great Subjects* there is an interesting description and criticism of a Lecture by Fox delivered in Manchester on 15th December 1849 :—

People talk about enlarging the mind. Some years ago, I attended a lecture on Education, in the Free Trade Hall at Manchester. Seven or eight thousand people were present, and among the speakers was one of the most popular orators of the day. He talked in the usual way of the neglect of past generations, the besotted peasant, in whose besotted brain even

thought was extinct, and whose sole spiritual instruction was the dull and dubious parson's sermon. Then came the contrasted picture ; the broad river of modern discovery flowing through town and hamlet, science shining as an intellectual sun, and knowledge and justice as her handmaids, redressing the wrongs and repealing the miseries of the mankind.

Then, rapt with inspired frenzy, the musical voice, thrilling with transcendent emotion—"I seem," the Orator said, "I seem to hear again the echo of that voice which rolled over the primeval chaos, saying, 'Let there be Light!'"

As you may see a breeze of wind pass over standing corn and every stalk bends and a long wave sweeps across the field, so all that listening multitude, swayed and wavered under the words. Yet in plain prose, what did this gentleman definitely mean ? First and foremost, a man has to earn his living, and all the 'ologies will not of themselves enable him to earn it.

Light ! Yes, we want light, but it must be light which will help us to work and find food and clothes and lodging for ourselves.

Froude's criticism of Fox has of course point, but he is speaking as a man of a later generation, a man who has not had to struggle to educate himself. Mr Moncure D. Conway has presented the broad issue in a lecture on the Educational Crisis, delivered at South Place Chapel on 10th May 1896, and we make no apologies for presenting his summary of Fox's efforts for National Education, and the reception the Bill was accorded in the House of Commons :—

About the beginning of the present reign this country began to wake up to the fact that it was behind the other nations of Europe in the matter of Education. Nowhere were there so many who could not read or write. Education had been in the hands of the National Church, and it had failed to do the work. The idea then arose of taking popular education out of the control of the Church and organising a state System ; and the foremost apostle of that cause was the Minister of this Chapel, William Johnson Fox. In this Chapel he pleaded for a new departure, and sixty years ago he gave five discourses on

National Education listened to by some of the leading men of the time, in which he pointed out the large amount of dogmatic darkness diffused among the children along with a minimum of light.

Two years later, or in 1838, the discussion, which had turned upon the use of the Bible in the schools, resulted in a plan suggested by Lord Brougham, that the Bible should be read straight through in the schools, without note or comment. Mr Fox showed the impropriety of that, but thought that careful selections might be made from the Bible and used in Schools. In the following year, 1839, Lord John Russell's government proposed a scheme for a normal school, which dealt with the religious question pretty much on the Cowper Temple principle of teaching doctrines held by the chief denominations in common. That was bitterly assailed by the Bishop of London (Blomfield), who insisted on control of education by the Church. Mr Fox answered the Bishop, but the whole controversy proved to him that the only solution of the problem was purely secular education.

Of secular education he was the first advocate, and having been elected by Oldham, Member of Parliament, he went through the country as a sort of missionary of that cause. The Historian, Froude, told me that he heard Mr Fox speak on the subject at Manchester, and it was the grandest display of oratory he had ever witnessed. It was to this that allusion was afterwards made by Mr Froude in his inaugural address as Lord Rector of St Andrews University. (Passage from Froude above quoted).

In the year following, 1850, Mr Fox introduced into the House of Commons his Bill for National Education which was devised with his friends in this place. This Chapel is the original home of the educational movement.

Mr Fox's Bill was defeated by a combination of Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Wesleyans, Presbyterians and Independents—because in his Bill, while admitting ways for all denominations to train the children of their faith, the government grants were to be given only in respect of the secular education.

It was defeated in the Commons by a vote of 58 Ayes to 287 Noes,—a majority against it of 229, but the three extended discussions given to it in Parliament constituted an era in educational history.

The plan of Mr Fox's Bill was that inspectors should take stock of the secular education supplied in all the schools in the country and report on the deficiencies. The amount of the deficiency being thus ascertained, he proposed that the locality should be invited to supply it ; that the inhabitants of the district should be summoned to elect an Education Committee (that is a School Board), who should have for their peculiar work, to supply the deficiency, and be empowered to rate the inhabitants for the expense. He would have regard to the existing schools. They were to receive grants of 10/- a head for each pupil efficiently taught in secular instruction ; they might go on with their doctrinal teaching ; but should receive no State-money for that. Then, new Schools, free Schools—were to be formed, for children between seven and thirteen, in which no religion was to be taught by the teachers, but convenient times arranged when parents might have their children instructed at their own expense in such doctrines as they wished.

The foremost opponent was Sir R. H. Inglis, Member for Oxford University, who in reply to Mr Fox's statistics, that only one child in thirteen was going to school, far more being educated on the Continent, said that similar education in England might make people here as revolutionary as they had been on the Continent in 1848.

Mr Stafford said that secular education was but another name for atheistical education.

The Roman Catholic Earl of Arundel read extracts from the heretical works of Theodore Parker, F. W. Newman, F. Call, and others, to show what education without theology was coming to.

Lord Ashley reminded Mr Fox that all the Nonconformist bodies were against secular education, and so did the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell—but Lord Ashley was far-sighted enough to see that the discussion raised, and the powerful speeches made in favour of the Bill, by Roebuck, Monkton Milnes (Lord Houghton), Hume, Milner Gibson, and other great men, would be pregnant with results.

"There has never," said Lord Ashley, "there has never before been submitted to this House a proposal so clear, so unmistakable, and calculated to be so prodigious in its results."

There was a chorus of compliment to Mr Fox for his eloquence, and from that day Secular Education became a definite cause and principle.

Twenty years later, in 1870, when the present system was founded, the original purpose of its framers was to pass Mr Fox's bill. The Clergy, seeing their supremacy over the Schools lost, were prepared for that secular system; but the Nonconformists insisted on adding to it the clause for *compulsory* religious teaching, which has now broken down. And now the Clergy, who repudiated Mr Fox's plan in 1850, have added to the School Boards, which he devised, the provisions which he devised for various religious teaching.

So that, now, Parliament is about to pass a measure which in its principle as to religion is substantially the same Bill that was proposed in the House of Commons 46 years ago by the Minister of South Place Chapel. I mention this only as a notable fact. Indeed the Church now goes beyond Mr Fox at one point; for he proposed that the various denominations should be equally admitted only to his new Board Schools, whereas this new Bill admits such various instructors even into Church Schools.

Whether this concession is likely to be of any practical value may be questioned; but in principle it is the largest concession ever made by the English Church; and of course it is made for some very substantial consideration.

A more recent appreciation of Fox's Bill, from the standpoint of a teacher of experience in Board and public schools, has been supplied by a friend of the writer's, Mr Carl Heath, as follows :—

Fox's Bill seems a very good one and very advanced for the period. It would not apply now because instead of refusing "government" grants as in 1850—Churchmen's and Dissenters real trouble now arises from their bitter struggle for the government money.

Fox apparently saw clearly what is only now beginning to be realised by statesmen that the essential factors in the making of the school are, as Froebel says, the teacher and the taught—not school buildings, inspectors, Government Departments,

codes, etc. Hence he demands what the teachers have been struggling for for 60 years—*i.e.* decent salaries and some security of tenure. His Bill provides what has only just been conceded to Elementary teachers, an appeal against dismissal from the local authority to the Board of Education.

He is as advanced also as the Danes in that he recognises all efficient schools, *private* or public.

His weak point is his Local Education Committees. Small local authorities have been the ruin of education in England. The Education rate should be a national tax. Education obviously in an unintelligent country *must* be imposed *de haut en bas*. The local grocer and the small farmer never *want* to educate the "lower classes." Why should they?

I don't think Fox's solution of the Religious Difficulty would be any solution to-day as far as organisation is concerned because the State now supports *every* elementary school and cannot go back and say "have your religious schools and the State shall fill up the gap with secular ones."

As you no doubt know there is *no* religious difficulty *in* the schools—it is all outside.

Fox's Bill as far as I can see would have left the teacher free to settle religious difficulties if any arose, with the parent, giving the parent the right to have that kind of religious teaching, elsewhere, that he desired "at a convenient hour." This really would solve the religious question—*i.e.* leave it to the teacher and the parent—protecting the parent's right by law. Pity it can't be done at once.

History repeats itself. The opposition to Fox's Bill came from the "contending factions," and a letter to Fox from Mr Joseph Kay fifty-eight years ago might have been addressed yesterday, with equal point, to Mr Runciman:

You are fully alive to all the immense difficulties of your great undertaking and I am quite sure from your speech that you fully understand how important it is to treat our religious parties with exceeding tenderness and to avoid any appearance of slighting the religious prejudices and beliefs of the people. The attention of the Nation is thoroughly awakened and all

eyes will be turned towards you after Easter, some, like myself, to wish you success in your arduous struggle amid the contending factions, others to find fault with whatever you propose and with whatever spirit you evince in your explanation !

CHAPTER XII

LATER CORRESPONDENCE—HARRIET MARTINEAU—
THE BROWINGS

OF the later series of Miss Martineau's letters to Fox, we can only give the tenor for the reasons already dwelt on in Chapter III. In connection with the modern Suffragist movement it is interesting to find that her programme in 1837 would serve to-day most of the purposes of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. A revision in Parliament of all laws affecting the Sex—Woman's legal status—her faulty education—her subordination as a wife—her prostitution to men—such are the reforms for carrying which Miss Martineau, seventy years ago, tells us a powerful organisation was being formed, though she adds that her doubt is whether women themselves would come forward in sufficient numbers to assist the movement. The grave illness which attacked Miss Martineau in the spring of 1840, and confined her to her invalid couch at Teignmouth, is described in a letter of 8th December 1840 and her determination to go on working, at all costs, at her new series of Tales, *The Play-fellow*.

In 1842 and 1843, Miss Martineau makes rather a bad shot at the outlook of Abolition in the United States, predicting that Virginia and the debauched South would join the North in the abolition of slavery, and that only indeed Texas and a few other states would retain it. She also takes Dickens severely to task for not seeing with her that

the most beautiful Spectacle of Humanity is—domestic America ! Time brings its revenges ! In a letter of 9th November 1842 she dwells on the irritation her refusal to accept an Official Pension had caused in the upper and middle class breast, and she traces it to a secret hostility to anyone who lifts the veil from the Royal Fount of Privilege and Patronage. Mediocre people always dislike the independence of an original nature, though it may be added that Miss Martineau attached far too much importance to her action in the matter. In the same letter she remarks that Dickens, in his *American Notes*, makes a mistake in charging the Yankees with a lack of humour which is a feature of their domestic life—far more so than of ours.

Her illness had drawn on her in 1843 the delicious condolences of many pious church people who, like the Bishop of Norwich, wished to be by her sofa and mark how the distinguished dissenter could face unperturbed her ominous prospects in this world and the next ! In a letter in January 1843, she bears feeling and touching testimony to the deep and cheering sympathy of Richard Moncton Milnes, and confides the project of her Autobiography.

In a letter of 23rd April 1844, of political prognostication on the Corn Laws, she declares that though the English people are anti-republican in spirit, the Chartists themselves being undemocratic, the worst omen to her is that the monarchy is a fraud and the poor little infant on the English throne is a queen only in name. Macaulay comes in for a wiggling three months later :—like many philanthropists' children he lacks heart, and this unsoundness of nature shows itself in the turpitude of his election address !

Three months later Miss Martineau gives Fox a long account of her beneficial experiences of mesmerism. Her *Letters on Mesmerism*, about this period republished from *The Athenæum*, excited the wrath and contempt of the

medical profession. We should probably now say the patient underwent a faith cure, and only censure the doctors who accused her mesmerists of charlatanism. Anyway, after a short course of mesmerism, Miss Martineau tells Fox how she threw physic to the dogs, and shed her bodily pangs and pains one by one. It was not however till about thirty years after Braid's first investigations into hypnotism in 1841 that Miss Martineau's experiences were explicable to science, though her visions, and her unwavering belief in their spiritual import, as shown by her letters of June to November 1844, are strange enough. Miss Martineau's happy experience was however not shared by Florance Fox, the deaf and dumb son, "a very active and intelligent young man," who naturally derived no benefit from a course of mesmerism. Miss Martineau speaks with a considerable degree of awe of her own utterances, when thrown into a trance, which were it seems of a lofty and sublime nature, too lofty to be communicated even to Fox's ears. Her own cure was so complete that having taken to her old habit of riding, in June at Ambleside, her male friends had to beg for mercy on the mountain roads, her speed outdistancing her speech. She passed long solitary days in ranging the hills like a mountain goat, and we have glimpses of her trolling for pike in the mountain lakes.

On 31st December 1845 she compliments Fox on his famous speech at Covent Garden Theatre for the League, and says that the people in her valley—a remarkably wise set—declare it is the best speech ever heard of! She owns that she is not herself as impartial historian of the period, and finds herself swept away by her feelings. Mrs Gaskell is called an excellent woman in a letter of 2nd August 1846, and there is an allusion to Eliza's acquaintance with her. The death of Miss Flower is referred to in a note of June 1847, on Miss Martineau's return from Egypt, and in May of the following year we

have a jubilant account of the influence of her volume, *Eastern Life*, Ibrahim Pasha having sent to Birmingham to buy plate-glass windows for his palaces, in consequence of Harriet Martineau's propaganda.

In a letter of 18th July 1849 we have an unsympathetic English view of O'Connell, and of his maleficent effect on Irish politics : Forster is rapped over the knuckles for lack of principle, and for his distrustful attitude towards women : the Arnolds, the Froudes and F. Newman's religious controversies in their private circle, are described. Fox's speeches in the Commons are commended, and the Whig wickedness of the Ministry, and the cowardliness of the nation in putting up with Lord John Russell all receive their deserts. In February 1853 we have a very entertaining and interesting account of Harriet's Lectures to the working people of Ambleside, their ignorance of English history, and their absorption in the subject treated, also a reference to her campaign against the people's bad housing and rack-renting, and the sad effect on their morals. She, so she fears, is the happiest spinster in England ! This remarkable woman writes in May 1855 to Eliza Fox to say that she has cut down the old Finden engraving of Harriet Martineau by simply reducing the enormous sleeves, formerly fashionable ! Eliza Fox had painted a portrait of Miss Martineau which was not however utilised. In January 1856 she signs the petition for a Married Women's Property Bill, remarking wittily that there is joy in the spectacle of all sorts and conditions of men trying to explain their attitude towards wife beating ! She is suffering from her heart and from the decline of her powers, and is only living by the assistance of wine, laudanum and ether (not of mesmerism) ; but none the less Miss Martineau was to live twenty more years. In December 1857 her mind and conscience are troubled by the question of the government of India, as well they might be, and she begs Fox to give her his ideas so that she may

issue a pamphlet before Parliament meets. The British public's ignorance of Indian affairs, in August 1857, she had found no less astonishing than we may find it sixty years later. This lengthy correspondence of nearly thirty years closes abruptly with the letter of 18th December 1857, due apparently to an action on Miss Martineau's own part which her brother, Dr James Martineau, explains in a letter, dated 13th January 1876, to Mrs Bridell Fox. His sister, he says, about twenty-five years back required from all her friends the destruction of her correspondence with them, and, on his own refusal to comply with her request, offered him the choice of keeping the old letters or receiving new. He chose the former, and she kept her word by never writing to him again. Dr Martineau adds that it is a relief to him to find that his sister's letters to Fox are still in existence, as everybody else had, apparently, met her wishes. And there is not a line to show that Miss Martineau ever broke her self-imposed silence, even on Fox's death.

In the autumn of 1858 Miss Fox went to Rome on a stay of some months, where she met her future husband, Mr Frederick Lee Bridell, an artist of decided gifts. Mr Bridell, who was born in Southampton of "respectable but not wealthy" parents, as a contemporary memoir puts it, had studied abroad, chiefly in Germany, and his notebooks of travel testify that he was completely absorbed by his art of poetic landscape. "Sunrises and sunsets, twilights and moonlights, the shifting aspects of the clouds, the trailing vapours of lake and mountain: the Coliseum at Rome by Moonlight; The Temple of Vesta, Tivoli; the Villa D'Este, near Rome": these favourite subjects of the painter, painted in the grand manner which placed "the grand panorama of plain, forest, lake, mountain, and sky vividly before you," as a critic in *The Art Journal* for January 1864 states, found a gracious patron

in Mr Wolff of Southampton, and later, much encouragement and appreciation from (Sir) Theodore Martin and (Sir) Frederick Burton. Although the marriage was in every respect a happy one, Mr Bridell's health, which had always been delicate, caused his wife cruel anxiety, and the consumption of which he died in August 1863 no doubt was already firmly established before his marriage, in February 1859.

In Chapters IV. and VI. Dr Garnett has touched upon the friendly relations existing between the youthful Browning and Fox and Miss Flower. It does not, however, appear that these relations were more than of an intermittent nature. The present writer has been unable to discover evidence of any close intimacy between the two families (1845-1860), though the following letters from R. and E. B. Browning to Fox and his daughter are full of the most grateful recognition of "old bonds."

NEW CROSS, HATCHAM, SURREY,
Nov. 6 [1845].

MY DEAR SIR,—Last year, I had a note from you, in which with other kind expressions, you gave me your address and an invitation to call there. I went abroad soon after, and after my return, have only been waiting such an opportunity as the sending another of my pamphlets to assure you (very unnecessarily I hope) that I shall have all my old pride and pleasure in availing myself of a privilege should you still be disposed to concede it. Ever yours very faithfully and affectionately,

R. BROWNING.

On 16th July 1852 Fox, in a letter to his daughter, gives an interesting glimpse of the Brownings, then on a visit to England :—

" . . . I had a charming hour with the Brownings yesterday ; more fascinated with her—more than ever. She

talked lots of George Sand and so beautifully. Moreover she silver-electro-typed Louis Napoleon!! They are lodging at 58 Welbeck Street; the house has a queer name on the door and belongs to some Belgian family. They came in late one night and R. B. says that in the morning twilight he saw three portraits on the bedroom wall, and speculated what they might be—light gradually showed the first: *Beatrice Cenci*! “Good,” said he; “in a Poetic region.” More light: the 2nd—Lord Byron! who can the 3rd be? and what think you it was but your sketch of me—He made quite a poem and a picture of the affair.

She seems much better; did not put her hand before her mouth, which I took as a compliment; and the young Florentine was gracious.

And, again on 26th of July 1852, Fox writes to his daughter, then in Paris:—

The Brownings are a great relief to me. They came in on Sunday evening for an hour, and I took tea with them last night, Gibson the sculptor being there. He is quite, not for painting, but for tinting statues, so as to take off the cold, glittering white of the Marble, and talked with much enthusiasm of some sculptor in Paris who is producing from the description in *Pausanias*, the Ivory and Gold statue of Minerva by Phidias.

The chief talk however was of Rosa Bonheur. She has been in London and turned all the world's head. The Daily Papers write leading articles about her. An Artist Conversation was got up for her reception. Landseer exchanges paintings with her. She is the Lover of animals as he is their Critic. Browning says her atelier is like a select menagerie. . . . Their boy is grown a perfect little seraph. I have never seen any six-year-old in my whole life to come near him for beauty.

It was, no doubt, on the occasion of the Brownings leaving England some months later that the following joint letter was sent by them to Fox, a copy of which is marked by Mrs Bridell Fox, “postmark illegible, perhaps 1853.”

II

DEAR MR FOX,—I hate leaving England without going to see you. You have been very kind and even if you had not, I should have had reasons of my own for wishing to hear you talk. The weather has taken me in chains. I have been so unwell as to be a prisoner to the house, and now I am giving ransom for more liberty by going to the South.

Good-bye, give my warm regards to Miss Fox and set me down as a true part of my husband in being gratefully yours,

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

DEAR MR FOX,—You stopped our mouths (literally) with great ripe peaches a long while ago, and have got the effect of it—we never even thanked you! But we did mean better things indeed, and indeed! my wife would not let me go by myself—then came the cold weather between her and her grateful intentions—and the last of all is a chaos of worry and work out of which *if* we get, to-morrow we shall leave for Paris—and thence to Rome as early as we may.

Will you believe the plain truth that it has rejoiced me more than I can say to re-knit the old bonds to you I was ever so proud to wear. And my wife is rejoiced to know you on other accounts besides mine. You must take both our loves in a very warm and hearty way; giving Miss Fox the like and count us ever for yours most affectionately and gratefully,

ROBERT BROWNING.

The next letter is also not dated, but the postmark is apparently 17th October 1853.

III

Tuesday night.

MY DEAR MR FOX,—Hour by hour I meant—was sure I thought, to call on you for five minutes, and thank you though never so poorly, for all your goodness to me and mine—but the dreadful last day has come out with all its peculiarities! We go to Paris to-morrow and shall return in some six months, it is hoped, readier to pay all debts—though not much abler

probably. But thank you, thank you for it all, criticism and sympathy and such a beautiful drawing book for Penini moreover ! He thanks you too—and so does my wife—who will take proper care of the drawing.

Both of us hope we shall stay in your kind thoughts, dear Mr Fox—with all loving regards to “Tottie” we are, both of us, yours very gratefully and affectionately,

E. B. B. & R. BROWNING.

My sister preceded us, some days ago, in a hurry—I may safely associate her feeling with ours however.

IV

ROME,
Dec. 1853.

MY DEAR MISS FOX,—Your letter followed me from Florence to Rome where we have fallen upon evil days . . . terrible disparities between the pleasure we had in coming and the affliction to which we came . . . the child of the friends who welcomed us dying only a few hours after our arrival, and their remaining little girl lying in great danger from the same fever. She is better—but our first day in Rome having been spent by a death-bed, you may suppose what a great black slur has crossed out the heroic recollections and how hard it is to take this for Rome really. Even now I feel as if I could be patient under Niebuhr (which is saying much) for the clearest thing I can see anywhere here is the one poor little grave.

Pleasant in spite of all was the coming of your letter. Will you tell your friend that her music and her intentions alike do me honor, and that I am cordially grateful to her. We think the music beautiful and expressive—and I should be proud after what you have told me of the composer, to be associated with a woman so noble, even if her work were less excellent. Will you say this to her, dear Miss Fox ?

Then let me thank you for your own kind words to me—the chords too at the end were tuneful. But you can't be in earnest in talking of yourself as a stranger to me, though, through a vexatious crossing of circumstances, I did see too little of you when we were in London. Surely we are *potential* friends after all ! Do you not grasp how often and how over

and over my husband has told me of your father's kindness, sympathy and help, and that these from the beginning of Robert's career upwards had been most precious and availing to him? Assure Mr Fox that there are *two* now to remember this for ever, even if you and he should forget it, which I hope you will not, after all.

Our child (thank you for asking about him) is radiant with health and spirits. He was talking the other day of that famous basket of peaches memorable among his most brilliant reminiscences.

Suffer me to remain with Robert's very best regards, yours affectionately,
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

The next joint letter from the Brownings (of which R. B.'s portion has been reprinted by Mrs Sutherland Orr in the "Life") looks like a belated answer to some letter of congratulation from Fox on *Aurora Leigh*, which was published in 1857, the year in which the account of the Brownings' doings is here given us:—

V

CASA GUIDI,
Jany. 17th, 1858.

MY DEAR MR FOX,—Do you think me really ungrateful or only stupid, for not having thanked you more immediately for the kindness of your letter? If either, I am ungrateful: since I *did* understand the worth of the kindness, the value of the crown it gave me:—only I do hope to escape the imputation of such an alternative; I do hope you will believe that I felt the kindness at least as much as I knew the worth of praise—yes indeed—After all, there may be good reasons for silence. Shall I confess to you that I was sad and humble as I read your letter? One wishes sometimes to have done better, when praised over generously for well-doing: and then, this has been a heavy year to me, and every light-springing thought in it has run the risk of being beaten down by others not light, and somewhat bitter,—which does not make me less grateful to you but more. Also what you wrote gave pleasure unclouded to my husband (as you who know him must know)

and then I had it over again, from his heart and eyes, thanking you all the time in my own. Indeed it was a pleasant surprise, that letter of yours, and it touched us to the quick, both of us, to observe by the date, that you had written on the very day of your election, not too full of triumph to forget your old *métier* of holding out a hand to those who climb.

By the way, Robert always talks of you, you know, as "his father in poetry."

Think how pleasant it must be, that he and I should have to look the same way! I, not only (now) on *his* account. Nor he, only, on his own.

Here is a new year which we load with good wishes for you and yours. Is Miss Fox with you? If so, she will accept our cordial regards.

We spent the summer at the Baths of Lucca, among the Apennines and the Chestnut forests, where Robert ran some frightful risks: such as the falling of his horse down a precipice of sixty feet, he throwing himself off just in time to escape the descent.—Then our child caught a gastric fever and frightened me more than I like to remember now.

Afterwards we were very near going to Egypt and the Holy Land, and should have gone if it had not been for my nerves, a little shaken about Penini.

He looks however rather rosier and better than before his fever, and his curls are as bright as they used to be.—He plays the piano, and reads German and French, besides of course Italian and English, and we don't overwork him,—you may trust us for that.

I should like to hear your private thoughts about India. There seems to me a quantity of ferocious Sepoyism in the English newspapers, and I have a good deal of scepticism about our rights in Oude and our aims generally in India, where we would "make the two ends meet": of filling our pockets, and converting to Xtianity by the point of the bayonet.

There has been here lately, performing at the theatres, a glorious Neapolitan Improvisatrice, Gianina Milli; and the Italians said that she paid a visit to the "English Improvisatrice"; meaning me. The word "poet," like the thing, seems to be dying out in our poor Italy! Only we don't deserve all that Ruskin says of us, after all. She (La Milli)

is very striking, full of eloquence in conversation, and with a voice like a musical instrument so sweet and vibrating. With eyes, too, let me tell you. Robert and I tried to persuade her to go to England, and it's a pity she will not.

Dear Mr Fox, I do hope you are well and in spirits.—How we should like it if you wrote to us sometimes,—but this is not asking,—I do not dare ! I shall leave a space for Robert, that you may be paid for having to read all this,—affectionately
yours,
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

“ A space for Robert ”—who has taken a breathing space—hardly more than enough—to recover from his delight ; if he won't say surprise, at your letter, dear Mr Fox. But it is all right and like you—I wish from my heart we could get close together again as in those old days, and what times we would have here in Italy ! The realisation of the children's prayer of angels at the corner of your bed (*i.e.* sofa). “ One to read and one (my wife) to write, and one to guard you through the night' of lodging-keepers' extortions, abominable charges for firing, etc., and so on. (Observe, to call oneself an “ angel in the land ” is rather humble, where they are apt to be painted as plumed cut-throats ; or celestial police. You may say of Gabriel at his best and blithesomest “ shouldn't admire meeting him in a dark land ! ”) I say this foolishly just because I won't trust myself to be earnest about it. I would, you know, always would choose you out of the whole English world to judge and correct what I write myself—my wife shall read this and let it stand if I have told her so these twelve years—and certainly I have not grown intellectually an inch over the good and kind hand you extended over my head how many years ago ! Now it goes over my wife's too. How was it “ Tottie ” never came here as she promised ? is it to be some other time ? Do think of Florence if ever you feel chilly, and hear quantities about the Princess Royal's marriage, and want a change. I hate the thought of leaving Italy for one day more than I can help, and satisfy my English predilections by newspapers and a book or two—one gets nothing of that kind here, but the stuff out of which books grow—it lies about one's feet indeed. Yet for me there would be one book better than any now to be got here or elsewhere, and all out of a great

English heart and head—those *Memoirs* you engaged to give us. Will you give us them?

Good-bye now—if ever the whim strikes you to “make beggars happy,” remember me. Love to Tottie, and love and gratitude to you dear Mr Fox.

From yours ever very affectionately,

ROBERT BROWNING.

VI

CASA GUIDI, FLORENCE,

June 6, 1859.

MY DEAR MR FOX,—I can't help writing to you to thank you for my husband and myself and for Italy, in sending you this Italian report of your speech on the Italian question.

One generous voice raised, and that such a thrilling voice as yours, is a thing indeed to thank God for, after all the disappointment and let me add the humiliation we suffer here as to the words and acts of England. Miss Hayes assured me that I was under a mistake in supposing there was no sympathy for the Italians among you. Mr Jameson writes to me that the Austrian feeling is confined to a “clique.” But I answer—if this is so, why do you suffer a clique to represent you? Why does a clique write to your newspapers, preside over your elections, speak in your parliament, make your government . . . and, what is worse still, inspire your poets? Why you extreme liberals, you men of the people even, have all spoken in the sense of the “clique.” How are we to know what is behind it—how? And how do you suppose these things are understood by the Italians—how? Do you expect them to believe with their intelligence that Louis Napoleon who was good enough to help England in the Crimea (and had an ovation among you afterwards) and good enough to help you again in China, is not good enough to help them, who find no other helper? If you have suspicions of France, have you no certainties about Austria? When a man leaps into the Thames to save a drowning child, is it your charitable custom to help him with stones from the bridge because he owes you a grudge you fancy and may come to fists with you next Tuesday? Is it charitable that the child is to be let

drown for *that*? Is it not rather cruel and pusillanimous and ignoble, I will add, to the last degree?

Yes, I am sure you feel it is so. But the worst is that the Italians feel it and that other foreign nations are aware of it and that the shame of it is on us all openly. Such men as Massimo d'Azeglio, moderate, wise, attached to English institutions and the English name, pass awful judgments upon us—I have seen such in his handwriting. Intellectual men here, whom I have known as distinguished for anglo-mania, as it is called, and high-Gallican tendencies, turn their faces away from us in sadness and anger together. Robert, on our first arrival from Rome, met Busacea the present minister of finance, walking in the street, with a book under his arm and no gloves, Robert stopped to congratulate him on the prospects of Italy. "Ah, but," said the minister, "England has done ill." The grief seemed as near to him as the joy. He had always loved England.

Also, nearly all the English abroad have conducted themselves in the sense of Mrs Jameson's "clique" at home. Mr Scarlett has identified himself with the Grand Ducal Party, that is to say with the employés. The insult to the Italian flag at Leghorn (which was keenly felt) has been reproduced by individuals in their small miserable degree. Think of "Success to Austria" being drunk in a circle of English gentlemen—our informant being the only one who refused it, here in Florence. Theodosia Trollope (who wrote an article in the *Athenæum*) said to me yesterday with emotion that she was "ashamed of speaking the English tongue in these streets."

Moreover there are dreadful rumours that the end will be your taking part in the war in the Austrian sense—people who are national can't understand a "neutrality" expressed by a general arming and sending out a fleet into the Adriatic, but we ourselves heard the other day from a liberal and well-informed quarter that in the case of Germany taking part with Austria, and of Russia therefore coming down on Germany according to her promise . . . (that is of Russia helping France and Piedmont to withstand the onslaught of above 1,000,000 armed men, flagitiously armed against the rights of humanity) England "*must* go in to the war against Russia." That is under certain expected circumstances England *must*

commit a crime ! And this is the position into which the small jealousies of the nation has drawn it. This is the possibility—open to us at last after all our prate about “ Freedom and Duty ” and morality in general.

There is a beginning of talk among the Americans that in the case of such a complication as the struggle would plainly be between the principles of progress and national justice and their opposites, America must, with whatever sorrow, go in against England.

Meanwhile your statesmen keep meddling here and there in Italy . . . now at Naples, now in Tuscany . . . just as though they had a right to meddle, and as if a finger's touch might not precipitate you into war. As to Louis Napoleon, he is as he always has been the representative of a democracy—and he never could have stood a moment except upon that ground. He goes where he must go. He comprehends the age and passes on with it, by means of the people and for the people. What you have called “ despotism ” in England, has been simply “ delegated power ” for the temporary use of those who delegated it. A great man in the highest sense, I think—but his acts will speak for him presently—and such as look for a repetition of the mistakes of the First Empire signally mistake both the man and the times. It is considered that your politicians in England do not understand the times and the necessities of civilisation and progress. I heard Massimo d’Azeglio say so. In fact, as an apostle said long since “ You make the word of God (*i.e.* the justice and truth of God) of none effect by your *traditions* ” ! !

Forgive all this insolence, dear Mr Fox, from a woman “ who should not speak in the churches,” much less among the politicians, do you think ? But I want to make you feel what is felt here, and how keenly it is felt here, and now there is a call upon your great heart and eloquent voice, for England's honour's sake, still more for the sake of Italy's safety. As to Italy we have no fears. *Never was there* a greater contrast between the Italians of forty-eight and the Italians of fifty-nine. They have learned by the sufferings of ten years, unanimity, self-restraint, calm, they have attained to conviction and faith. Nothing can be finer than the attitude of the people. What has been done here was done with dignity and quiet, and is supported with constancy and courage. Such

as cannot go to fight give of their substance, or of their day's labour—most affecting it is to see the account of half-pauls flowing in from the hands of the poor. You may believe in the story of the bombardment, also you may believe in a letter found with other correspondence in the hands of a woman, a legatee of Radetski . . . found by Cavour and communicated to the Government . . . a letter under the hand of a Grand Duke to this effect. . . . "I send you the hottest heads of my subjects. Do me the favour to shoot them!"

The rapture of gratitude with which the French intervention has been received, you can but faintly conceive of. Some French soldiers told us (when we went down to gossip in the camp at the Cascione the other day) that at Pisa especially the enthusiasm was quite moving, "feast," said they "as well as acclamations" and they were particularly charmed with one Italian girl who came to give them a cigar or two each, saying "Mes chers amis, je suis heureux de vous voir ici." They repeated "mes chers amis" as if it were something particularly precious to them.

The Victoria medal was on the breast of one of these soldiers, and he said "many of us have it and I assure you we all wear it with great pleasure." Robert complimented him upon the chivalrous deed they had come to do in Italy. He answered, "Certainly we shall get nothing by it—We shall go away without a recompence—that is" added he modestly, "such of us are not killed." This soldier when we parted kissed Penini with effusion and little Pen, who is very jealous for his Italy, kept saying long afterwards "How very happy I do feel! How very kind it was of him to kiss me!"

Dear Mr Fox, forgive all these wanderings. Give my love to your daughter, whose long continued anxiety about her husband I grieve to understand. May better accounts reach us soon. I don't think Rome agreed with him physically as well as it did æsthetically, and the English bracing air will give a better chance to his convalescence than he could get out of Italy. We arrived, about a week ago, by the Siena road. The country was quiet and solitary. We had letters from Rome yesterday describing a continuance of the state of feelings we left there and is identical with the feeling through the peninsula. A great irritation everywhere at the bearing of Engiand.

Perhaps my husband will put in a word, only where's the room? Yes—reproach me—for surely he is better worth hearing. We are however of the same mind on this question.

Thank Miss Hayes, giving her my love, for her welcome letter.

Believe me, dear Mr Fox, affectionately and gratefully yours,

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

I put in a whole heart full of thanks, dear Mr Fox, and am not troubled to find the phrase that justifies them. “You have done just like yourself,” and what a comfort it has been to see “a word in season, how good it is.” You will take advantage of every opportunity, won't you? Kind regards to Tottie, and best wishes to her husband. With all the old gratitude and loyalty to yourself from R. BROWNING.

A letter of 5th April 1859 from Robert Browning, at Rome, introducing his friend Cartwright who has written “some articles in *The Westminster*, *The Times* and other publications, “who is “anxious to profit by the circumstance of this dissolution of Parliament to enter the new one, if that may be, on the Liberal side,” is the last letter, apparently from the Brownings. Two letters from Robert Browning to Mrs Bridell-Fox dated respectively 21st July 1866 and 27th July 1871, relative to the return of “scraps of letters and verse written by me when a boy,” have been preserved and also a friendly letter from Mrs Barrett Browning on 6th March 1890, giving her husband's permission to publish the above correspondence.

CHAPTER XIII

LAST YEARS

AFTER his return, in December 1852, a second time, as MP. for Oldham, Fox's victory was celebrated by his supporters, in three meetings in February 1853, at which he was presented respectively with a signet-ring and crimson velvet purse containing 112 sovereigns (the number of the majority by which he was returned) a silver inkstand and gold pen, and a silver medal. The inscriptions on two of these gifts—"Education the Birthright of All" and "Free Trade and Religious Liberty," show the chief planks in his Radical platform. In his speeches on these occasions we find Fox predicting that "the time will come, and the time must come, when woman will be something more than a mere adjective to man in political matters. She will become a substantive also, and why not. . . . In Lower Canada women vote for representatives. . . . However I speak not of such a thing as of immediate and pressing urgency in this country, but as that which I am not ashamed nor afraid to look forward to."

The extension of the Franchise, co-operation among the working-classes, the repeal of the Paper Duty, the Ballot, of these measures Fox was a staunch advocate. The cause of internal Reform was however to be set back some years by the Crimean War, 1854-1856, the Indian Mutiny, 1857, the Volunteer Movement of 1859, and the exciting spectacle abroad of the Italian War of Independence, and the American Civil War 1861. Although

Fox delivered some interesting speeches in the House of Commons, notably on the Ten Hours' Bill of 1850, and, we are told, "soon gained general respect by his tact, discretion and moderation," his "success was limited by his age and the didacticism acquired in the pulpit." After practically resigning his ministry in South Place Chapel in 1850, where "the last discourses he delivered were six in 1852," his most important sphere of influencing the public mind was through the lengthy series of weekly letters to *The Weekly Dispatch*, signed "Publicola." Though printed as letters these contributions, which were handsomely paid for, were a popular feature of the paper, and Fox was given *carte blanche* to say whatever he liked on any subject he chose. The series of letters which appeared from 1846 to 1856 are practically a chronicle of Radical thought of the day, and as such would be well-worth reprinting if their dessicated journalistic style did not appear, now that the living interest in many of their subjects has evaporated, somewhat like hard ship's biscuit. It is however refreshing to see how Fox never hesitates, rarely compromises and never beats about the bush. Thus on the question of amending the Divorce Laws which it has long been plainly hinted by the highest legal authorities is advisable, Fox in 1858 says boldly :—

In Prussia there is no difficulty in obtaining divorce on the ground of incompatibility and without the filthy and immoral requisites demanded by English legislation . . . law may free from obligations which have come immoral . . . in cases of collusion the parties sin for the very purpose of producing evidence. Let the law no longer require the adultery as essential, and there would be an end of the collusion and the adultery too.

On Sabbatarian bigotry, Sanitary Reform, Bribery, Colonial Administration, the Procedure of the House of Commons, the Drink Traffic, Army Reform, Prison Reform,

Cremation, the Rights of Asylum for Political Refugees, Woman's Property, etc., Fox puts forward the plain common-sense arguments which were destined to prevail a generation or so later against the fossil prejudices and vested interests of the day. He is as consistent as he is clever in exposing the tactics of the English clergy and the Bishops in acting as a drag, in the case of every measure of social justice and mental emancipation. In matters of foreign policy his judgments are often shrewd, but his policy is always inspired by ardent sympathy with the European democracies. He championed the Crimean War on the ground of "the popular abhorrence of the part which Russia took in putting down the Hungarians, and otherwise upholding the despotism of Austria. Hence our identification of the Czar with barbarism and despotism." In a striking article in December 1854 on "Poland for the Poles" he says :

We must require the immediate recognition of the Polish flag, as our pledge of the ultimate recognition of the Polish nation. Unless this be done now we may hereafter find that we have lavished oceans of blood and mountains of money only to leave the incarnate power of barbarism a little feebler than it was and that only for a little while. Poland is the real barrier of Europe.

He attacked Cobden, Bright and Gibson for "making a pro-Russian Movement," and protested against the inefficiency of "those Government departments which we entrust exclusively to aristocracy." The Peace missionaries, in his view, were "actually serving the cause of Russia, the most military nation upon the earth, the most greedy of territorial aggrandisement, whether by fraud or force, and the most opposed in its policy to the spirit of civilisation and the prospect of human progression." And he waxes indignantly sarcastic over the indifference of America to the European struggle :

"Manchester and America are in sympathy; only as America has not gone to war she has no occasion to cry out for peace. She looks on and calculates . . . one grieves to see her become a mere huckster among nations." In defence of this warlike spirit of his old age (a not uncommon phenomenon) Fox writes to G. J. Holyoake in September 1855:

I have long thrown overboard the argument from New Testament precepts as such. . . . I do not wish extracts from the Lecture on War to be put forward just now. . . . Taking all the reservations and exceptions into account, the change in my opinions is not very great.

It is a pity that Tolstoy's sketches of War in *Sebastopol*, written in the same year, 1855, and not translated into English till more than thirty years afterwards, could not come in Fox's way, or he might have been less emphatic than he showed himself in his speech at Oldham, 1st December 1855, when he declared "that the surest road to peace was the vigorous prosecution of the War. (*Hear, hear and loud cheering*)."

The report in *The Oldham Chronicle* shows that Fox retained at the age of sixty-nine his intellectual powers unabated, and all his old art of rousing the enthusiasm of an audience by his oratorical skill. In spite of the cheers and general congratulations of his 2000 listeners Fox lost his seat at the general election in the spring of 1857, only to be returned again in October of the same year, filling the vacancy caused by the death of the member, Mr Platt. Fox's relations with the Oldham Reform Association appear to have been very cordial, and at a meeting in August 1858 when he was alluding to the strong feeling shown by the operatives against him in 1847-1852, a voice cried "they were led astray." While Oldham according to Mr Samuel Buckley "selected men distinguished solely by the immense vigour and power of their intellects, although some of them had

risen from a very humble position, as for instance William Cobbett and their representative, Mr Fox," the old veteran held his seat to be "a noble recompense for the past." He was however conscious of his growing infirmities, and writes to the Liberal election agent, Mr Chas. Mellor, in March 1859, that he thinks "his true and tried friends at Oldham may easily find younger and abler champions, though none more earnest to fight their battles and that of a common Cause." He retained his seat, however, in the General Election of the spring of 1859, and his Election Address puts the Enfranchisement of the Working Classes in the forefront, a reform which after Disraeli's and Lord John Russell's unpopular Bills, was not carried till Lord Derby's Reform Act of 1867.

On the Indian Mutiny of 1857, Fox showed himself outspoken and fearless :

On the putting down of this insurrection there is no question. I have no sympathy with puling philanthropy or mere sentimentalism. . . . The danger seems to me that in the national feeling vengeance should become predominant over, I will not say mercy but justice, and a savage retaliation absorb the qualities of a righteous retribution. . . . There must have been bad government ; the inference from that fact is irresistible. Nor is it strange that there should have been. We did not conquer India for its own sake but for ours. Nor did we conquer it for the general good of our community, but for the special benefit of a class. And we have never overlooked that class as they needed sharply. Indian affairs have always been a bore. We wanted cotton the other day and that enforced a little attention to them ; but generally speaking it required the temporary and obvious shaking of an Indian empire to rouse the public mind to any reference to its concerns. . . . In governing Indians have we remembered that the Government must not only be good in itself but must also appear good to them ? . . . And what do our Bishops and divines incessantly repeat ? Why that all the evil arises from India not having been Christianised ; that we have neglected opportunities for conversion and proselytism ; that we must, in future, make

amends for past negligencies, and adopt more sufficient measures for the salvation of the heathen. . . . The men of trade and commerce are another class who exult in the prospective transference of the Government of India to the Crown. And why ? India can grow much more cotton than it does ; can clean it better, pack it neater, and (by railways) convey it to the coast more expeditiously. Now Manchester desiderates an ampler supply of the raw material. . . . Moreover labour is dog cheap in India and land is dirt cheap. Mills arise in imagination at the very idea ; the Indian factories are filled with hands ; and London and aristocracy hide their diminished heads. Well, all this is good, as far as it goes. The tendencies of commerce are civilising, and favour freedom and religion. But they are not the paramount and sole ends of the government of natives.

With strong prescience of coming events, and probably in receipt of private information from Mazzini and other refugees, Fox published a very powerful letter in *The Weekly Despatch* on 2nd August 1857, on "The Refugees" :

Are we prepared to submit to the interference of France and Austria with our treatment of political refugees ? . . . Napoleon may demand, Palmerston may grant, and we be never the wiser. The first intimation of any such understanding may be that the refugees find their movements watched, their correspondence intercepted, their schemes betrayed and even their persons delivered up to sanguinary vengeance. Towards this we are progressing.

Mr Fox denounced *The Times* as well he might, for its sycophantic tone towards the European Courts, and for branding such men as Mazzini as " assassins." . . . " The Emperor of the French visits the Queen of the English this week at Osborne. His political right hand, Count Walewski, comes with him, and it is no secret that he and his minister intend a conference with Lord Palmerston. What and who will be the subject of that conference ? "

The sequel, as Fox declared it would be, was shown six months later in Palmerston's *Conspiracy to Murder Bill*, on which the Government was defeated and thrown out of office. Fox took part in the debate of 9th February, and made some excellent points :

There were those who did not object to wade through slaughter to a throne—and it was in the common course of things that they should be hulled by slaughter from that throne. . . . If England gave way, what could we expect Belgium to do ? What Switzerland, what Sardinia ? Why, one after another they might all show this subserviency ; there would not be a place on the soil of Europe where a political exile could set his foot. And we should have commenced the disgrace of setting an example to these weaker States.

In November of the same year, Fox writes to his daughter news of the death of three old friends :

The day you left came news of Miss Macready's death, poor good Aunty. Next day came news touching me far more nearly. Mrs Mill died on the 3rd at Avignon, I suppose on the way to Italy. She would not have objected to being buried there, in the ground which Petrarch has given a world-wide fame to ; and of which it might (if she remains) be said, "A greater than Laura is here." Then comes the 3rd., for I don't reckon honest old Robert Owen who intervened ; and that is very sad, Madme. Kinkel, nobody knows how, fell from a first floor window, and was taken up dead in the garden. I have not yet written or noticed, to any one of the survivors ; for the tidings came so rapidly like a succession of stunning blows on brain and heart, that I really could not.

On 17th December :

I am acting on Browning's opinion, and going through a *regular course* of Balzac, Mudie sending me 2vols, a week, until I get through all the works in his library. He has quite got

hold of me. Yet there are some plagiarisms as those wholesale from Tam O'Shanter, which smack more of cleverness than insight. Still his insight is marvellous.

And a month later :—

December 31st.

What an immense array of Christmasses and New Years I look back upon. It is almost frightful. And in what a variety of connections and relations have they found and left me. It would be a Phantasmagoria of figures could I paint all the dinners and people. All the first batch was cleared off long ago—the second have almost all followed—and the succeeding set, if so it can be called, is very inferior to either. I am making up my accounts and I think it is time. I wish you less variety and more continuity.

Again, in 28th January 1859 :

The House begins next Thursday and I think I shall go and hear Granny Victoria read her speech this time.

Oldham celebrated my birthday by a Public Dinner. I hold pretty well, I spoke shortly last night, but the fag tells upon me if it were the end of the Session. The Reform movement creates a world of Parliamentary correspondence. But I take my Balzac regularly and find it strengthening.

April 1st.

You may suppose I am in a state of thorough exhaustion. Last night (viz., this morning) finished our debate of seven nights with such a scene of excitement as is only witnessed in the House once in many years. Out of 654 members, 621 were present and voted. Ministers were beaten, on their sham Reform Bill, by 39 ; and to-day there is no House, their being considering whether to resign quickly or try a Dissolution first. I hope not the latter which would be a trouble some. However thank God I have lived to raise my voice in the Parliament of Britain for the Emancipation of the Working Classes.

Fox was informed by his election agent that his failure to visit his constituents would not materially signify, and his doctor warned him that he could not take the journey

to Oldham without considerable risk. His health was breaking up, and his eyesight was failing and in May 1860, we find him writing "if my present state of bad health continues I should not think of offering myself as Candidate for re-election." He held on to the seat however for two years more, resigning in April 1862, when he received "the great regrets of the Reformers of Oldham at the loss of their member." His connection with *The Weekly Despatch* terminated in March 1863, no doubt through his increasing infirmities, but ostensibly through a difference of opinion as to the attitude of England towards the American Civil War, Fox holding that if the South persisted in demanding separation, the North should concede it; but that the recognition of Southern independence by England should be made contingent on the abolition of slavery. This letter, dictated, speaks of his great feebleness and the failure of his eyesight. The end came fifteen months later, on 3rd June 1864, when he died at his house in Sussex Place of inflammation of the bladder. The Memorial Service, 12th June, was held by Dr Moncure D. Conway at South Place Chapel, to the ministry of which the latter had just been appointed.

A committee of Fox's friends, with Mr P. A. Taylor, M.P., as Chairman, subsequently raised a fund for "a suitable Memorial to perpetuate" Fox's memory, and it was decided to publish an edition in twelve volumes of his Works—which was accordingly issued, 1865-1868. His wife, Mrs Eliza Fox, with whom he was formally reconciled, some years after Miss Flower's death, died on 21st April 1869, and their children Florance and Franklin, "in accordance with her wish," published in the same year, a *Memoir*, consisting chiefly of Extracts from Fox's Letters and Journals, 1812-1821. The inscription placed on the memorial tablet in Brompton Cemetery was written by John Forster, whose original draft runs as follows :—

W. J. Fox.

M. P. for Oldham.

Born March 1, 1786.

Died June 3, 1864.

An eloquent orator, a fearless political writer, a delightful critic.
Of Civil and Religious Liberty
And All the Forms of Moral and Mental Progress,
The Zealous and Untiring Advocate.
First to introduce into the House of Commons
A Bill for National Secular Education.
He devoted himself unremittingly to the Advancement
Of the Working Class from which he Sprang.

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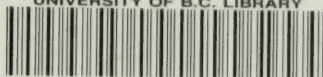
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